



COOLEMAN RIDGE PARK CARE GROUP

Newsletter September 2012

Previous Sunday Meeting 19 August – GAN Chauvel

Officialdom conducted a fuel reduction burn in this patch just before our workparty. The usual area we tend was thus a blasted heath. An intrepid 10 workers turned out on this cold but sunny winter's afternoon. We attacked the standing stalks of dried Fleabane **Conyza spp.* massed in the unburnt area. These weeds came out easily from the damp ground, as did Great Mullein **Verbascum thapsus* and Sowthistles **Sonchus spp.* From under the weeds many native plants emerged – abundant Kangaroo Grass *Themeda triandra* and pretty bushes of Peach Heath *Lyssanthe trigosa*. The weeds were also hiding the alarming spread of St John's Wort **Hypericum perforatum*. Ranger Richard stopped by, checking on African Lovegrass **Eragrostis curvula*, and took note of the need for the Wort to be thwarted too. The stayers finished up with tea and cake. It's a glorious view to the mountains now, beyond the mulch-heaps we built.

Fire Meeting Report

In the quest for enlightenment, representatives of our Park Care Group and numerous other people squeezed into the meeting room of the Cotter Road depot of Parks, Conservation and Lands in mid-August to get the facts on control burns from Dylan Kendall, Senior Fire Management Officer in the Fire Management Section. In the days before the meeting, around 11 hectares of Cooleman Ridge was fired in what was a low-intensity burn. Nothing like prime pink-tailed legless lizard habitat going up in smoke to focus on the reasons for such radical action.

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Future Programme

In the cooler months, we hold afternoon sessions. NB: AGM 21 October.

Next meeting – Sunday 16th September Cooleman Trig.

Approach from Monkman Street, Titheradge Place or Freebody Place.

NOTE 1:

The eroded foot-track to the trig is very steep and quite dangerous, in our view. The easiest and safest access is via the gates above Freebody Place.

NOTE 2:

This is our annual attack on weeds in this location. Graham did a great deal of follow-up work here after our last session, poisoning **Euphorbia depauperata*.

- 1.30 – 4 pm
- Plant ID; remove exotic growth.
- Wear long sleeves and trousers, enclosed shoes, hat and gloves. If wet, bring raincoat.
- BYO drink & snack.

Contact Arminel 6231 7392 if you need any gear or more info.

The Emergency Services Act 2004 is the legislative basis for bushfire management in the ACT. The Act begets the Strategic Bushfire Management Plan, which sets objectives and strategies for five years. This plan incorporates research information and analysis, fire prevention activities, responses to and recovery from fire. Trickling down the pyramid, the process delivers Regional Fire Management Plans. These documents, which are map-based, try to balance the protection of people and assets with conservation and biodiversity.

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What's around

Leucochrysum albicans

Common name: Hoary Sunray

Family: Asteraceae.

Leuco(s) *Gk* = white + *chrysum*
Gk = golden; *albicans Lat.* =
growing white, in reference to
the hoary (ie silvery, frosted)
foliage.

Low tufted to mounding perennial, to 30 cm tall. Leaves generally narrow, felty, greyish 2.5 – 10 cm long and 1-9 mm wide. Flowerhead an everlasting daisy, 20 – 25 mm wide, with a yellow disc surrounded by papery bracts that are either white or yellow, often backed pink or purplish, evident before flowerhead opens. Uncommon though widespread in our region.



Photo Pat Ryan

Information from *Grassland Flora – a field guide for the Southern Tablelands (NSW & ACT)* by David Eddy et al.
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Then comes the Bushfire Operations Plan (BOP). This is the nitty gritty. The BOP is for one year and is an action document listing works programs and allocating resources to the highest priority work. The BOP contains information about timing of prescribed burns, weather conditions and a raft of checks needed before work can be carried out. The actions in the BOP are matched to the resources emanating from the annual ACT budget. The plan for the current year is not yet available because the budget funding has yet to be finalised.

Although we don't have a current public document, some actions have taken place eg on Cooleman Ridge and Mt Painter. Should members wish to check out previous plans, a good start is at

www.tams.act.gov.au/play/pcl/fire_management.

Arminel Ryan ryan@pcug.org.au

The meeting did not nor was it intended to discuss the use of control burns as a tool to manage land in the ACT. Suffice to say that burns in the Nature Park will occur in accordance with legislation and plans deriving therefrom. Nevertheless those in the ACT administration are very aware of the balance required between conservation and urban protection. As a Park Care Group we can point out unique conservation values in our area so that they may be taken into account. Local knowledge is recognised!

Doug et al

Administrative Arrangements

Rohan Thomas, our Treasurer, is now also our webmaster. This makes him a treasure twice over. We are all very grateful to him, and to our original webmistress, Karina, who launched the group into cyberspace.

Web site URL: <http://www.coolemanridge.org.au/>