



COOLEMAN RIDGE PARK CARE GROUP

Newsletter September

2010

Previous Sunday meeting August 15th

For a week the Sunday forecast had been bad and on cue the afternoon turned nasty. Cooleman Trig proved to be the wrong place to be even though we were fascinated watching the rain patches sweeping across the hills (Doug proposed we should cut and run 5 minutes before hypothermia set in). Herbicide application was clearly out of the question. The ground was wonderfully soft but still the Euphorbia roots were firmly anchored in the fragmented rock. Dogged pulling and chopping dislodged plants to fill several garbage bags, and by 3.30 we were debating where we could hope to find shelter for enjoying the hot drinks and cake Arminel had lugged to the top. Instead we found ourselves scurrying for the cars/bicycle.

While this is the second consecutive year we have been unable to use herbicide due to adverse weather we are gradually rolling back the *Euphorbia depauperata* infestation, and flowering was less advanced than in September last year and October before that.

A highlight was finding a well established *Polystichum proliferatum* Mother Shield Fern (see What's around), and *Asplenium flabellifolium* Necklace Fern (see August 2008) sheltering under the same rock. *Acacia rubida* and the exotic *A. podalirifolia* Queensland Wattle were starting to flower as was a mysterious shrubby eucalypt that turned out to be *Eucalyptus crenulata* Victorian Silver Gum.

The rangers are waiting for the ground to dry out before taking a vehicle in to remove the *Acacia baileyana* cut down in recent campaigns by Graham, and by the Scouts. ☼

Future programme

Next meeting, Sunday September 19th

- GAN/Chauvel for clearing exotic growth. Plant ID
- 1.30 to 4.00 pm
- meet at the Kathner St entrance, or at GAN/Chauvel
- bring hat, gloves, hacker, drink, snack

AGM Sunday October 17th Kathner Street Nature Trail ☼

AGM

All office positions are open for nomination. Please discuss your interest with the president: Arminel phone 6231 7392, email ryan@pcug.org.au ☼

President's report:

Drains

"Drains have occupied me quite a bit over the past month. Indeed, I've been feeling quite drained!! I've waded through the documentation, consulted with Doug Tinney and David Mackenzie, and met with Roads to discuss the project. This meeting took place at my home on Thursday 19 August. Peter Tait and Ian Hickson represented Roads ACT; Steve Welch and Martin Lind from SACTCG kindly attended also. I'm preparing a detailed meeting report for the participants and for our records. (I'll make this document, and the maps and drawings provided by Roads, available to anyone who requests them.)

"In a nutshell, there have been significant efforts made to address our concerns. Only two trees are to be removed. These will be replaced with new plants of the same species.

"The project will begin from the Namatjira Drive end. It will be carried out in short sections, with each section being stabilised and revegetated before beginning the next. The Kathner Street end will not be done until later - certainly not until next financial year.

"For the first section of the works, funds are available this financial year. The project went to tender and had been due to start about now, but has not. Rain isn't the only factor - I'm told there was some problem with the tendering process.

"Our role remains one of observing the action. *Please note - if members have any issues or concerns about the work of the contractors, these should be reported to Peter or Ian preferably through myself, other Committee member or David Mackenzie.*"

Arminel ☼

Serrated Tussock

Anna keeps a close watch on things up from Namatjira Drive. Suspecting *Nassella trichotoma* Serrated Tussock she asked TAMS weeds officer Steve Taylor to check it out and he confirmed it. We have not recorded it previously

Steve came back to spray it 2nd September and suggested that after a couple of weeks we inspect the area and chip out/spray any that he missed. He also suggested that we should do some control on the Verbascum as they tend to take over especially after the Serrated Tussock dies. ☼

What's around:

Family: DRYOPTERIDACEAE - *dry*s: Gr: tree, oak, *pteris* Gr: fern



Polystichum proliferum – Mother Shield Fern

Native, fronds 2-3 pinnate, mostly 50-80 cm long, main rachis densely scaly, often giving rise to scaly proliferous buds. Sori circular; indusium brown, with a prominent black centre, ± persistent (scan at right).

poly- Gr: many, much, *stichos* Gr: row.

This specimen grows on Cooleman Trig. **Note:** during the 1990s a plant was known on the side of Mt Arawang in a small overhang, together with a *Cyathea australis*. Both are long since dead. It has been suggested that they were planted there. ☼

Those Nesting Boxes on the Ridge

From Doug:

“You may have noticed a number of nesting boxes in trees adjacent to or not far off the maintenance track. They are part of a PhD research project on Indian Mynas by ANU student Kate Grarock. Kate’s study comprises some 210 boxes in fifteen reserves around Canberra. There are some 14 boxes on Cooleman Ridge.

“The project started in June 2008 and is planned to come to a conclusion in September 2010. Not long to go, it would seem. The project is intended to build on previous research about the impact of Indian Mynas on Australian native birds. The results of the research hopefully will provide insights into not only the effect of mynas on native birdlife but help to answer questions about the removal of mynas from the environment.

“Chapman is one of five “no trap” zones in the research. Observations of the boxes during the nesting season indicate that mynas don’t have it all their own way, despite their aggressive tendencies. Box number one seems to be used by galahs, which have chewed back the overhanging “eave” and enlarged the entry hole. Box three is definitely a myna habitat but four, six and eight seem to be the preserve of rosellas. Eastern rosellas in box four have proved to be very aggressive in defending their site - interesting observations and totally subjective, but it is encouraging to think that the natives are active and have carved out a stake in the battle for nesting sites.

“In the two years the boxes have been up, mynas are present in the space from the back fences of the properties bordering the Ridge to the maintenance track and a little further up the hill. But numbers are by no means in plague proportions despite the no trap policy and provision of convenient nesting sites.

“It will be interesting to see the results of the research.” ☼

Dragons

Karina has placed Barry’s photos of an Eastern Bearded Dragon on our web site: to view them click [Wildlife](#). On the last Friday in July Erika found herself weeding the bank of the Kathner St dam under the watchful eye of a 60 cm water dragon.

Note: to view Birds on the web site, click [page](#) on [Wildlife](#). ☼

64° 23’N, 19° 58’W

Coming in to land at Reykjavik we were intrigued by acres and acres of blue that didn’t quite look like Paterson’s Curse. From the bus we could see it spreading along the road verges and up the naked hillsides, unmistakably lupin. Iceland is geologically recent and the Alaskan lupin was introduced to stabilise the lowland sands. It contributes nitrogen to the soils and this inhibits the native flora. The locals either love it or hate it so there is controversy about its removal.



At Geysir ☼