



COOLEMAN RIDGE PARK CARE GROUP

Newsletter April

2007

Previous Sunday Meeting, March 18th

I'm running out of superlatives for describing the progress of GAC/Darrell. We have devoted a lot of time on previous occasions to the dogged chopping out of *Salvia verbenaca*; now that area is peppered with vivid green *Themeda triandra* tufts, self-sown and thriving on the recent rain. This was encouragement enough to focus us on the removal hundreds more plants – yes, there are some left but the balance is shifting.

Another pine seedling was recorded and removed; a single clump of *Eragrostis curvula* was dug out. The latter features prominently on the way up to our area as well as bordering on other sections of access tracks (and the nature strips of the suburbs). It's vital to prevent its establishment in our prize areas.

The plant count was 36 natives out of a total of 53 – the best proportion to date. A welcome identification was *Wahlenbergia luteola*, with large patches of the intense blue bells which show only their white or creamy exteriors before opening-time. ☼

Future programme

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

Next Sunday meeting, April 15th

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

Nature trail

The pamphlet is designed, grant money has been received but beyond that progress has stalled. Graham has been on leave for several weeks, returning 1st April.

We hope to hear from him soon so that we can schedule a track-making work party for next month. ☼

March log

180307 *Wahlenbergia luteola* GAC/Darrell
pine seedling removed above Darrell Pl
300307 **Datura stramonium* Kathner St
Maned Wood Duck Kathner St dam ☼

Molonglo Valley development

As we reported in January, FOG (Friends of Grasslands) has serious reservations about this development. FOG Newsletter excerpts follow:

...conservation groups have not opposed some greenfield development in the Molonglo Valley if this is confined to burnt out pine forest and degraded rural lands. This is not ACTPLA's position.

FOG understands that, ACTPLA's Preliminary Assessment proposes three areas for development, referred to as East Molonglo Valley (the larger of the three areas), Central Molonglo Valley (about half the size of the first area), and West Molonglo Valley (a relatively small area). The Conservation Council's position, which FOG supports, is generally not to oppose East and West Molonglo Valley developments (with some caveats mentioned below), and to oppose the Central Molonglo Valley development. However, it should be pointed out that any development in the Molonglo Valley poses a threat to declining raptor species.

The proposed Central Molonglo Valley development would destroy large areas of yellow-box red gum grassy woodland and natural temperate grassland.... and habitat for a number of raptors and threatened and declining woodland bird species. The Conservation Council proposes that part of the Central Molonglo Valley becomes part of the Kama Nature Reserve and part becomes a conservation lease. FOG considers this a reasonable compromise.

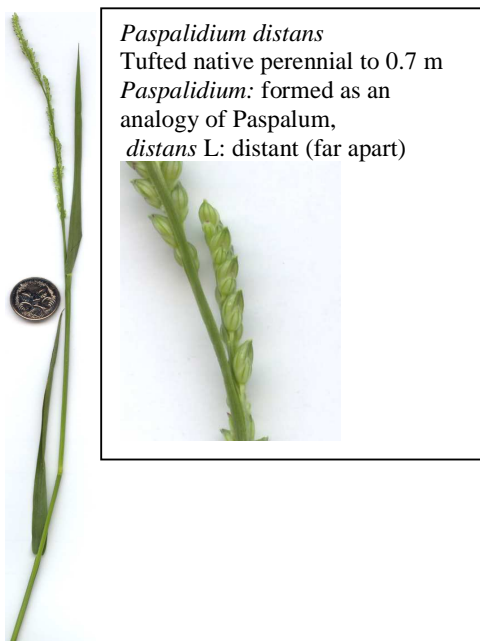
The major concern is a proposal to build a dam which would inundate a significant area of habitat of the pink-tailed worm lizard. This animal has special protection status in the ACT, and is listed as threatened by Commonwealth, NSW and Victorian legislation. The dam would not be consistent with best-water management practice and should be deleted from the proposed development. Our other concern is that the development is not confined to former pine forests or degraded rural lands and in places (e.g. near Aranda) will see the further removal of woodland areas.

We urge you to contact your Members of the Legislative Assembly to urge that they encourage the Government not to proceed with the Molonglo development in its current form.

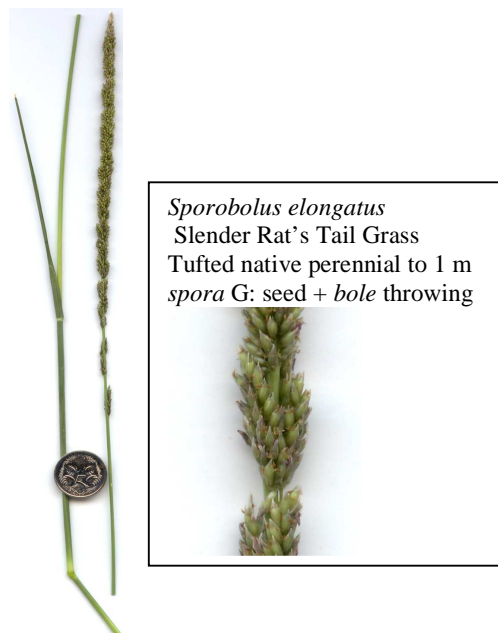
Bernadette O'Leary (FOG Secretary) for further information bernadette.oleary@webone.com.au or 6247 7959 ☼

What's around

Family POACEAE – the Grass family



Paspalidium distans
Tufted native perennial to 0.7 m
Paspalidium: formed as an analogy of Paspalum, *distans* L: distant (far apart)



Sporobolus elongatus
Slender Rat's Tail Grass
Tufted native perennial to 1 m
spora G: seed + bole throwing

Coordinators' Meeting – 14 March 2007

Doug made these notes:

Some twenty-five people attended the meeting. Most Park Care groups were represented, as were two of the Catchment Groups. Several rangers and other Parks staff also attended.

Works Program/Weed Removal

Geoff Price spoke to this item.

The amalgamation of Forestry, Urban Parks and Places and Canberra Nature Park is complete. The overarching authority is the Department of Urban Services.

One focus of the new organisation is weed eradication.

Nominated weeds of national significance (willows, blackberry, gorse and Chilean needle grass) are the principal target. But the weed program is haphazard due to continuing dry conditions (in some areas) and uncertainty about the availability of funds. Another difficulty is the availability of contractors at short notice to perform the work.

Some \$300,000 became available in November for weed control. This was used (part of Coleman Ridge was sprayed for briars, St John's Wort and pyracantha – none of which are included in the above list of weeds of national significance).

Another \$300,000 for weed control has to be used in the remainder of this financial year. Experience of the managers is that this level of funding is about the maximum they can handle with regard to availability of contractors and personnel to manage the contracts.

One question raised at the meeting and to be looked at by the Park Care coordinator is whether the groups can assist in research on weeds.

In general discussion, the question of training for chemical use was aired. Steve Welch said OH&S requirements meant that a person with two or three day training qualifications probably needed to be present when herbicides were used. (continued next column)

(cont) The rationale for this was queried when the main herbicide used by Park Carers was glyphosate and then usually in a cut and dab situation. In short, Park Carers were asked to nominate for training in the mixing and use of herbicides so that somebody is available to meet the guidelines. Anybody interested should speak to Rachel Dawes, the Park Care Coordinator who is located at the Cotter Road depot, Weston Creek. Phone: 6207 2193. ✨

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

In the next ten years (to 2007) detailed long-term plans for the Ridge should be developed and implemented. The alignments of roads, tracks and trails, the locations and types of fencing, the control of erosion, the composition and location of indigenous plantings, the control of exotic plants and animals, the management of visitors, the place of fire regimes and the fate of nonindigenous plantations decided and acted upon. Inventory and survey, at least of vertebrate animals and vascular plants is essential.

In the short term there needs to be a decision made on regulating the activities of pet and stray dogs (and their owners) and that of cats. Implementation of the policy should follow. There are provisions for fines but action is never taken despite the attacks by dogs on people, other dogs and wildlife (swimming in dams with tortoises, chasing kangaroos etc.).

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

Water

From the Upper Murrumbidgee Waterwatch Newsletter

Over the Canberra region on an average summer day, most lakes and ponds lose 6 mm of water to evaporation. This works out over the course of a rainless summer to a drop of over half a metre in depth. ✨