



COOLEMAN RIDGE PARK CARE GROUP

Newsletter November 2006

Previous Sunday Meeting, October 15th

Apart from the startling fact that our AGM was really well attended, it was otherwise uneventful. Reet acted as returning officer and nothing changed. Members will receive the minutes and reports attached to this newsletter.

A recurring topic of discussion is recruitment, so we asked our two newest and youngest members why they chose to join us. They were unhesitating in crediting it to the professionalism of our web site. For other new members word-of-mouth was the important factor.

Having disposed of the formalities we walked up to Reet's area, following the markers Graham has set out indicating a possible alternative route for the final descent of the walking trail. This side-tracks the dangerously unstable present finale, and would do away with the trouble and cost of step-building.

Reet's area is inspiring and the first orchid (*Diuris sulphurea*) of the season was there to welcome us. ☼

Future programme

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

But

It has several times been suggested that an early morning start would be appropriate for the summer months of November, December, January and February.

Like 8 am.

The e-mail to members with this proposal drew no comment, and the coming Sunday meeting, November 19th, will put it to the test. ☼

Next Sunday meeting, November 19th

- inspection of the grazing trial area, post recent grazing; then cutting and dabbing woody weeds behind Cooleman Trig
- **8 - 10.30 am. Note change!!**
- meet at Monkman St steps, or at the gate to the cattle area
- bring hat, gloves, hacker, drink, snack, raincoat if it is wet ☼

October log

Early October black snake Kathner St dam
041006 *Euphorbia depauperata* found above Fence Post Hill; cut and dabbed. First sighting off Cooleman Trig
6-161006 cattle grazing in trial area. Then transferred to horse paddock at base of Mt Arawang.
151060 pine seedling removed: 0683887/6086083, 682 m ☼

Dear Parkcare Volunteers

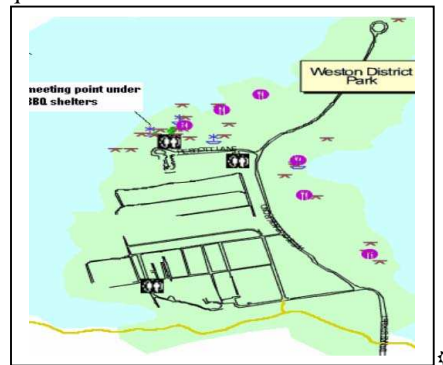
Parks Conservation and Lands would like to say thank you to all our Parkcare volunteers by inviting you to lunch on International Volunteers Day on Tuesday 5th December 2006.

Where: Weston Park (large shelter site)

When: Tuesday 5th December 2006

Time: 12noon

RSVP Essential: 17th November to Rebecca 62072145 or Rebecca.Blundell@act.gov.au please specify any dietary requirements



Special Event at Chapman Primary

Jenny writes:

"A special assembly to celebrate 'Democracy Week' was held at Chapman Primary School on Tuesday 17 October. Doug Tinney and I were delighted to be asked as 'special guests'. The assembly, which was led by a very competent team of Year 5 and 6 students, was a chance for parents and all students to share some of the fine achievements of this multicultural school, including an Indonesian Day, a dance festival, a peer support program, and a strong strand of environmental education. This is where Cooleman Ridge Park Care Group comes in, as we have been working with the Year 4 classes for a couple of years now, taking them for walks around the interpretative trail above the school and helping them with some simple landcare tasks (digging out verbascum!) and identifying some of the local flora and fauna.

The school spent some of its funds on two workshops for the Year 4 classes with the talented Canberra duo Shortis and Simpson. With John Shortis on piano, Moya Simpson helped the two classes develop a wonderful little song and dance routine on the subject of landcare on the ridge. It was quirky, funny and very effective. Afterwards, their teacher, Martina Fleschner, presented Doug and me with a potted banksia as a thank-you from the classes.

We are looking forward to working next year with a new group of Year 4 students, and hope to upgrade the signage on the track with the support of Environment ACT and the Southern ACT Catchment Group". ☼

What's around

POACEAE – the Grass family



**Bromus molliformis* – Soft Brome
Exotic tufted annual to 90 cm
bromus from Gr. for oats, *mollis* L: soft
Native of Mediterranean region ☼



**Festuca elatior* – Tall Fescue
Exotic tufted perennial to 1.2 m
festuca L. stalk, straw; *elatior* taller (taller than
usual in genus)
Native of Europe ☼

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

Native birds are common on the Ridge. Raptors such as Black-shouldered Kites (*Elanus notatus*), Australian Kestrels (*Falco cenchroides*) and Wedge-tailed Eagles (*Aquila audax*) may be seen. Galahs (*Cacatua roseicapilla*) Crimson Rosellas (*Platycercus elegans*) Eastern Rosellas (*Platycercus eximius*) and Sulphur-crested Cockatoos (*Cacatua galerita*) are quite common. Pied Currawongs (*Strepera graculina*) are numerous especially at cooler times of the year. Exotic birds include Common Mynas (*Acridotheres tristis*), Blackbirds (*Turdus merula*) and Common Starlings (*Sturnus vulgaris*).

Of considerable conservation significance is the Pink Tailed Legless Lizard (*Aprasia parapulchella*). This "nationally endangered" lizard lives under rocks set in native grassland where it feeds on eggs and larvae of a number of ant species (Jones 1996).

Ants feature in a number of ecological interactions of great interest. While not yet proven on the Ridge it seems likely that ant-tended larvae of butterflies that feed on mistletoes and on Blackthorn (*Bursaria lasiophylla*), will be found. Another invertebrate of interest is the colourful leaf-rolling larva of the butterfly *Netrocoryne repanda* (Hesperiidae) which was seen to defoliate a small specimen of *Brachychiton populneus* (Kurrajong) in the spring of 1997.

Ecosystems on the Ridge have had a long history of disturbance from exotic herbivores, feral cats and dogs and foxes, and farming activities like tree cutting, sowing of pastures, fertilizing of pastures and ploughing. (cont. next column.)

Fire regimes may have been altered. Large numbers of woody weeds (*Pyracantha*, *Cotoneaster* and *Rosa rubiginosa* particularly) were present in 1990 but reduced to small persistent populations by concentrated effort of the Cooleman Ridge Park Care Group by 1996. These species have probably been dispersed into the area by birds (native and introduced) and foxes from surrounding farms and gardens. Hatton (1989) demonstrated that currawongs and horses distributed *Rosa* (Sweet Briar) seeds on the Southern Tablelands of NSW and in the ACT.

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

Cattle update

On 3rd November cattle were grazing the section of the Bicentennial Horse Trail that includes the old dam. The Trail was closed off with elaborate gates secured by combination locks.

Horse riders can get the code for these locks by phoning the land managers. ☼

Floriade

Bess was in Canberra for about a week in October and spent most of her time on the Ridge. Her hillside got a thorough going over, and was found to be in good shape underneath the litter that has accumulated during the 4 years since she left us. She met our Friday morning contingent, as well as Tina and Doug who came across specially to meet her.

Her verdict on the Ridge as a whole: doing rather well.

I don't know if she ever actually got to Floriade. ☼