**Presidents Report for the AGM, on 18th November, 2018.**

The Cooleman Ridge ParkCare Group (CRPCG) has continued to care for Cooleman Ridge for the past 12 months., with assistance from the rangers of Parks and Conservation Service.

1. **Management of Invasive Plants.**

Our monthly work-parties are an important component of our weed management. We usually have 6-10 members each month, and we work for 2-3 hours. Each month we visit one of the 5 sites on a rotational basis. Most of the weed removal is by manual methods, but some is chemical, (glyphosate) and sometimes a combination of both is used. We recently removed tree-guards and stakes which had out-lived their protective role in a recent planting near Kathner St.

Our Friday morning group continues to meet at Kathner St, and manually removes the invasive plants and exotic grasses in the fenced-in area.

Individual members work on the ridge as the opportunity arises, targeting the blackberry, briar roses, verbascum, african lovegrass, wild sage, tweedia, euphorbia, phalaris, fleabane and horehound which are scattered along the ridge. Various methods are used, including manual removal, cut-and-dab with glyphosate, and some occassional spraying with glyphosate.

It is noticeable that there are considerably fewer verbascum plants, especially in the northern areas of the ridge. The woody weeds have also visibly reduced. This may in part be due to the assistance we received from the Green Army last year. However the blackberry bushes, and also the briar roses, appear to be quite resistant to our methods, and many regrow even after 2-3 treatments.

The fire-reduction burn in April this year on the NW flank of Cooleman Trig seems to have caused an increase in Patterson’s Curse, wild sage and St Johns Wort in parts of that area. However, it may merely be that these weeds are now more visible with the shorter grass.

1. **Newsletter**

Our monthly newsletter continues to be distributed electronically to all our members and interested people. In addition, this year we have made specific boxes and placed these at 4 sites, one at each end of the ridge, one on the track near Cooleman trig and another at the Lincoln Place entrance. We have 2 more boxes to be positioned when appropriate poles can be erected.

During the year a concerted effort was made to locate the previous copies of the newsletter. These were found in various members’ houses, and all but 2 since the first one in 1991 are now posted on our website. This provides an excellent resource for anyone with a historical interest in the Ridge. Hard copies have been provided to the Heritage Library in Woden.

1. **Website**

Our webmaster has made considerable upgrades on our website over the past year. The plant, bird and animal lists have been improved to enable easier access and better sorting and filtering. New sightings from Canberra Nature Map are now posted to these lists as soon as they are confirmed. There have been significant additions to the insect list in particular.

1. **Parks and Conservation Service**

The rangers from PCS continue to support our park group in many ways, including the following:

* providing a Convenors meeting every 2 months to discuss relevant problems
* provision of the new Parkcare Hub to enable better communication between groups and to enable new volunteers to find us,
* providing very welcome clothing and tools,
* providing chemcert training
* providing chemicals for spraying
* organising contractors to spray the weeds, including blackberry, St Johns Wort and Serrated Tussock.
* assisting us to use Collector for mapping weeds/rabbit warrens etc.

The Ridge has also been involved in the new Landscape Classification System, which is intended to inform prospective visitors what they can expect when they visit our nature park.

Our thanks to the rangers and administration workers for their assistance during the year.

1. **Pamphlets**

Our revised and re-printed Kathner St Nature Trail pamphlet has been available in the distribution boxes since June. The delay from the expected date was due to publishing problems and waiting for some posts to be re-positioned into spots that correlated to the text of the pamphlet.

The recently-found cache of Chapman Primary School Nature Trail pamphlets were considered to be sufficiently up-to-date to warrant placing them in the display box on the Cut-drain Path above the Chapman Primary School. The box has had to be regularly replenished, so people are taking and using the information.

1. **Library/Archives**

Early in the year, Arminel and Linda sorted through the multiple boxes of archived material and library books. Some books were distributed to members or given away, since their use has been superseded by the internet. Material relevant to the history of the group has been stored in plastic boxes, and is currently stored in Linda’s study.

We also found detailed bird-lists, compiled by Bess and David Sledge, from 1991 to 2000. These have been copied and provided to Canberra Ornthithological Group for their records.

**Summary**.

Cooleman Ridge is currently in a fairly healthy state, with fewer large, noticeable weeds. Unfortunately, we still have the less noticeable, but very pervasive St Johns Wort, Wild Sage and African Lovegrass.

The reason for the reduction in weeds is primarily due to the small number of dedicated members who consistently and persistently tackle the invasive weeds throughout the year. Their efforts are greatly appreciated.

The new seat commemorating 25 years of Parks and Conservation Service looks terrific sited under the beautiful Eucalyptus polyanthemos, and it is a joy to sit on and enjoy the fabulous view over the Brindabellas.

I’d like to thank all the Committee members whose efforts throughout the year have been highly valued and effective. Rob Lundie (Secretary and Newsletter Editor), Rohan Thomas (Treasurer and Webmaster), Alan Ford and Doug Tinney (who have also stepped in during my absence), Jenny Horsefield and her husband Rob, (who made our new boxes), and Brigitte Brickwood (Committee).

I am confident that next year will be similarly successful.

Linda Spinaze

President.