

Friends of the Pinnacle AGM July 2012

Convenor's Report

Again, thanks to everyone for attending this, the 2012 Annual General Meeting of the Friends of the Pinnacle. We're here to celebrate our achievements over the last year, eagerly anticipate the next and nominate, elect and support a new Coordinating Committee.

So let's review our many activities and achievements.

Our priority project continues to be the ground-layer restoration project, led by Don. Funded to over \$50,000 by the ACT and Federal Governments and the Canberra Labor Club, the project investigates the effectiveness of various treatments to shift the balance from exotic to native ground-layer species. All ACT funding has been expended and by the end of this calendar year all Federal monies will be used. We will then rely on Labor Club monies to finish the project during 2013-14.

This project has proceeded as planned, although there were delays in undertaking the first burn treatment, and so this treatment may need to continue over a further year. I understand from Don that we are seeing a response to the treatments which will be communicated to members and others soon by Don Driscoll

Once again weed control is our primary area of activity, with 1,364hrs of effort over the year, well up on 940hrs in the previous year despite losing a month during the closure for the kangaroo cull. This year we carried out more weed control along our boundaries (just under 200 hours in North Kama, Bottom Pinnacle and on the Northern boundary), and there were some weeks during summer and early autumn when a fotpin was weeding every day.

Through team and individual efforts huge gains are being made against woody weeds, briar rose, verbascum, horehound, thistles and other invasive weeds. The very visible reductions in weed infestation are obvious to everyone that's walked the reserve for a few years. It may be a few years yet before we see the benefit of our efforts against African Lovegrass and St Johns Wort.

Following months of preparation, advice from Greening Australia and with a grant for planting projects from Spicers Paper through Landcare Australia, our first planting day was held on 9th October 2011. Aimed at filling gaps in the existing woodland, this planting was a small-scale pilot project of 218 plants. 22 fotpins and families turned out on the day to put the planning into action, making it a very successful event

Other significant events this year include:

- our first erosion control day in April;
- staging fotpin stalls at both Hawker and Weetangera Primary School fetes;
- organising and running guided walks programs in spring and autumn, and monthly walks by Rosemary;
- 5 fotpins attending a GCG organised, Greening Australia lead seed collection training course;
- being the only parkcare group invited by the ACT NRM Council to present on our weed control activities at an ACT Weed Forum;
- the Committee forming a common view on the kangaroo cull and cattle grazing in North Kama, and releasing policy statements on these issues;
- Elizabeth and John being trained on biodiversity monitoring techniques and establishing a monitoring plot; and

- continued progress with the shearing shed, the community focal point project, which is now waiting for contaminated site assessments to be completed.

Our webmaster continues to build and develop our website, and find ways to enhance its utility for submitting data and sharing information. I especially like his analysis of our weeding efforts, how they compare across years, treatments and species and against targets. How Warren finds time to be webmaster extraordinaire and spray over 4,200 briar rose, and probably tens of thousands of verbascum, may remain one of fotpin's enduring mysteries.

Already the first half of 2012-13 year is looking busy and productive, and is off to a quick start.

ACT Parks have delivered 120 coir logs, funded under its Woodlands Plan, for us to install in Bottom Pinnacle - planned for August 11. Just yesterday five of us were at the Pinnacle with Craig Wainwright cutting and treating Cootamundra Wattle to not only remove this weed but also to cover the coir logs once we can transport this material closer to the control sites.

August 19 is the rescheduled kangaroo survey, following which we are looking to resurvey rabbit warrens (now planned as an annual event) before our next community planting day, in the Bottom Pinnacle, on the first weekend of September.

September through to December will be all hands on deck for weed control, interspersed with guided walks, and the ground-layer project in October-November.

The ACT Government plans to conduct a prescribed burn in the Forest Block in 2013, probably in autumn. Our ecosystems have adapted to a range of environmental factors including periodic burns by traditional owners, and yet it appears to have been some decades since the majority of the reserve has seen fire.

Committee perhaps needs to consider developing a policy on fire as a management tool for biodiversity conservation in the Kama Pinnacle Corridor.

I'm pleased to see our group progressively engaging in the set of management themes touched on in our rules – weeds, pest animals, grazing pressures, land and water conservation, fire and biodiversity restoration.

This report would not be complete without thanking ACT Parks' officers for their great support. Promptly supplying chemicals, coir logs, access keys, support with the ground-layer project and following up on our many queries has been hugely supportive. I would like to also thank Ginninderra Catchment Group for administering the ground-layer project funding, and Greening Australia for their advice and encouragement.

I'd like to thank all fotpins for their energy, camaraderie and enthusiasm, and in particular members of the Coordinating Committee, which by the way has settled into a sustainable pace of meetings and activity. Within Committee and across the group, we are tracking very well indeed.

I have greatly enjoyed the last two years as Convenor and would encourage anyone that might be interested to join Committee either as an office bearer, or as an Ordinary Member, and in this way more directly contribute to the advocacy and coordinating activities of our extraordinary group.

Pax

22 July 2012