



## fotpin update #30 February 2020

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We are, I hope, now reaching the end of a Summer that has been unforgettable for all the wrong reasons. Drought followed by record heat, rampaging bushfires, dust, smoke, golfball-sized hail and now, finally, some very welcome rain.

Like the rest of us, the Pinnacle Nature Reserve has been struggling to cope with the extremes of this Summer, and many of the trees are showing the signs. Many small trees and saplings have died off altogether, and many of the larger trees have sacrificed one or more limbs, redirecting the scarce moisture and nutrients to the remaining branches. Add to this the leaves stripped from the canopy by the hailstorm, and the result is a reserve that is looking far from its best. Only time will tell whether the Pinnacle can recover from this season or whether this is just the beginning of more extreme weather. Fingers crossed, we will have a nice wet winter that will allow the reserve to store plenty of water to depth in the soil ahead of next Spring.

I'd like to take this opportunity to say how grateful I am to all those people who have put out water containers for the wildlife around the reserve, and for keeping those containers full through the worst of the heat and smoke. I've seen as many as a dozen species of bird drinking and bathing at one of the water containers, so I know they've made a real difference.

One mercy of the extreme heat and dry is that weed growth was suppressed along with everything else, so we had a relatively quiet weeding season. Even so, our weeders logged a total of 146 hours of weeding effort between November 1<sup>st</sup> and January 31<sup>st</sup>, often in very hot conditions, so a big vote of thanks for everyone who contributed.

In other news, Len has been busy raising seedlings to revegetate the burned areas in Weetangera paddock, with his latest effort producing well over 300 Red-leg Grass plants. Last Friday, he and a small group of fotpin volunteers planted 70 of the seedlings ahead of the predicted rain. The plants were protected by a mix of recycled plastic guards and small wire guards put together by Len and his wife. Over the last several months, Len has germinated and planted an enormous number of grass and forb seedlings to help revegetate the burned areas of Weetangera paddock, consistently working to protect the plants against the heat, the dry and some very hungry rabbits. He deserves a huge vote of thanks from us all for his commitment and the time and effort he has devoted to this task.

In the absence of weeds to pull or spray, Warren has also been busy revamping our website, including a new [flora and fauna portal](#) that points to all the species lists we have. Most of these are also new pages - sourced from the Canberra Nature Map where Alison Milton (mainly) and a few other keen field naturalists and photographers make regular contributions of new findings. When you add them all up there are more than 550 native flora and fauna species occupying or visiting the Reserve. This includes 109 native bird species and 186 native plant species. Not bad for a reserve that used to be mostly old sheep paddocks.

In the following pages are some of the other things that have been happening since the last fotpin update.

## Weetangera Primary School fete

As always, the WPS fete was a great success, and the volunteers who staffed our stall at the fete spent an enjoyable few hours raising awareness of the reserve among the local parents and children. My thanks to everyone who helped out, and especially to Marty, our ParkCare Ranger, who organized the display boards and the snappy table cover and teardrop banner advertising our presence. (See photo below).



## Annual Planning Meeting with PCS

Our annual planning meeting with PCS was held at the PCS Mitchell depot on November 15<sup>th</sup>, 2019. In attendance were myself, Warren, ParkCare Ranger Marty Bajt and District Ranger Riko Ahlers. Offsets Ranger Michelle Ralph was unable to attend. The topics discussed included the following:

- Weed control, including the control of African Lovegrass on the reserve perimeter.
- Ground layer revegetation and the need for ongoing deliveries of water
- Monitoring of the revegetation work along the Molonglo pipeline corridor
- Remediation of the remaining heaps of metal along the southern edge of the water tanks compound and the potential to use the metal to assist in grading the De Salis St car parking (including removing the illegally dumped builder's rubble)
- Grading of the Central track
- Incursions into the reserve by stock from adjacent paddocks
- Pathways for improved communication with the Offsets rangers to better coordinate our activities in the Pinnacle extension

The meeting was generally cordial and constructive, with PCS committing to work with fotpin to achieve our goals to the extent that their budgetary and staffing constraints permit. We were pleased to hear that Kate Boyd will be taking over as Offsets Ranger for the northside reserves and is likely to remain in that position for the long term.



## Watering Bee

On a warm morning in early December, over a dozen volunteers fronted up to help dole out some much-needed water to the seedlings we planted in the Bottom Pinnacle last May. A full water cube was emptied and its contents divided out among roughly 100 plants in the space of a very productive two hours, after which participants enjoyed a well-deserved cuppa and some home-baked treats. Well done everyone who took part and many thanks again to Marty for making sure the water cube was full on the day.



*A couple of younger fotpins collaborating*



*Base camp*

## ACT Landcare Awards

Fotpin was nominated for an unprecedented three categories in this year's ACT Landcare awards: Individual Landcarer, Community Landcare Group and Australian Government Partnerships. Unfortunately, we didn't win in any of our nominated categories, though I received a Highly Commended (i.e. 2<sup>nd</sup> place) in the Individual Landcarer award. The winners in the respective categories were all individuals or groups who have been active and successful in the Landcare area over several decades, and the fact that we were nominated is a recognition of the outstanding achievements of fotpin in the 10 years since we were founded.



*Me, (former) GCG Coordinator Karissa Preuss and Ngunawal elder Wally Bell at the awards dinner*

## Weetangera Paddock Revegetation

Despite the heat and the smoke, Len and his team have continued their amazing work in revegetating the burned areas of Weetangera paddock. Len has successfully raised several hundred native grass seedlings and is now busy planting them out and trying to protect them from the increasingly voracious rabbits and other hungry critters.

His future plans include broadcasting native grass seed over some of the less vegetated parts of Weetangera paddock and is now working on a strategy to match groundcover plant varieties to the areas best suited to their characteristics and preferences. In time, the work Len is doing will help us in formulating a strategy to restore native groundcover species more broadly across the reserve. If you'd like to get involved in Len's work, see the [ground cover restoration](#) page on our website.

## Upcoming Events

- Hawker Primary School Fete - Sunday April 5<sup>th</sup>, 10 am to 2 pm  
We will again be holding a stall at the Hawker Primary fete and I will be in touch again closer to the event to call for volunteers to staff the stall. It's always a lovely event to be a part of and a great opportunity to talk to locals about the reserve and what we do.
- Autumn bird walk – Sunday May 17<sup>th</sup>  
I have had to delay my Autumn bird walk this year to allow myself time to fully recover from hip surgery. I expect to be in better shape than ever by mid-May and am looking

forward to leading anyone who's interested around some of the Pinnacle's birding hot spots to check out the resident birds and any of the migrants who might still be around.

- Fotpin AGM and 10<sup>th</sup> Birthday Party – Sunday June 7<sup>th</sup>, venue TBA  
Fotpin turns 10 this year and we think it's an event we should definitely celebrate. We also decided that we might as well hold our AGM on the same day! We've settled on a date and will work out the other details later. Mark the date in your calendars and watch this space!

I should also note that while fotpin has no plans to participate in this year's Clean-up Australia Day campaign, the Ginninderra Catchment Group will be organising an event and Lake Ginninderra on March 1<sup>st</sup>. You can check out the details and sign up for the event on their website [here](#).

John Brannan  
Convenor

February 18<sup>th</sup>, 2020