



fotpin update #12 March 2014

Convenor's Report, Summer 2013-14

Dear Friends of The Pinnacle

Looking out at the lush green paddocks now, it's hard to believe how dry and parched they were less than a month ago. With very little rain until last month and scorching temperatures that broke records all over the country, this Summer has been hard on the reserve (and our gardens!). Even so, the Reserve is looking lovely and the planting we put in last October is still doing well, thanks to the efforts of a number of fotpin members who have taken turns watering the plants through the worst of the heat. A few of them have now "adopted" the planting as their own patch and will be looking after it for the longer term.

The Briar Rose Replacement Project (or BRRP, as we like to call it) is one we've been working on in the background for some time now, but this Autumn it will finally get off the ground. It's designed to replace the hundreds of woody weeds (mostly briars) that we've removed or sprayed in the Bottom Pinnacle and North Kama over the last 4 years, thereby providing shelter and foraging habitat for the small birds in the area. With formal approval from the ACT government (PCS) and a gift of 250 plants from our good friends at Greening Australia, we'll be putting in phase one of the replacement program in the next couple of months. The locations of the new plants are designed to complement the GA Woodland Restoration plantings of the last few years, providing additional stepping stones and connectivity across the landscape. Stay tuned for details!

Our weeding teams have been kept busy through the Summer. The little bits of rain we did have triggered new flushes of St. John's Wort and, more worryingly, African Lovegrass. This last has been a particular focus of our attention over the Summer, with Pax and the other Chemcherted sprayers working tirelessly to get on top of the ALG menace. We've also had invaluable help from the local PCS rangers, particularly our old friend Craig Wainwright, who was out there just a few days ago doing some much-needed follow-up spraying. Ultimately, we'll need to get City Services (the TAMS department responsible for maintaining urban parks and roadside verges) fully on board in the effort to keep ALG at bay around the edges of the reserve, and there are indications that this might, finally, be starting to happen.

Another key area of concern is the program of hazard reduction (HR) burns currently being conducted by the ACT government. It is very likely that there will be a burn at the Pinnacle this Autumn, with the Forest and Hawker paddocks being the main areas to be targeted. In expectation that this would happen, we have been making every effort we can to ensure that the HR burn at the Pinnacle is carried out with as much care and sensitivity as possible. A rare plant survey and reserve assessment was carried out in December by a group of fotpin volunteers led by Michael Mulvaney from the ACT Govt's Conservation Planning and Research (CPR) division. The upshot of that survey is that we now have specific locations mapped in the reserve for 7 plants classified as rare in the ACT, and large areas of the reserve have had their status upgraded (see www.fotpin.org.au/vegetation_condition_2013.html). One particularly important factor in this is that CPR has direct input to the people who conduct the HR burns and can ensure that the burn is conducted with the appropriate sensitivity (in theory, at any rate). Ultimately, we'll just have to wait and see. Aranda bushland is scheduled to be burned this coming week, so our turn is probably not far away.

Our Autumn program of guided walks is taking shape, with my bird walk already scheduled for April 6th as part of this year's Heritage Festival. Our other walks will include one led by two local aboriginal leaders, Wally and Tyrone Bell, and a walk led by PCS ranger and Assistant Parkcare Coordinator Craig Wainwright. Dates are still to be decided.

So, once again, we're looking forward to a busy and hopefully productive and enlightening season.

Cheers,

John

John Brannan