



Friends of the Pinnacle AGM May 2025

Convenor's Report

This year has been notable in a number of respects, but perhaps none more so than the completion of the Interpretive Signs project, which began with a grant application in April 2022 and ended with the formal launch of the signs in April this year.

Our membership has continued to grow and our weed management program continues to tackle the weed issues in the reserve, with varying degrees of success. We continue to keep abreast of the ecological values of the reserve through regular surveys and by monitoring the citizens science data logged in Canberra Nature Map. And we continue to engage with the community through our programs of guided walks, joint planting days and participation in community outreach events.

Interpretive Signage

As you will all be aware by now, this project has finally come to fruition and the 6 new signs are installed and already attracting views by reserve users. It is very satisfying to see these signs being read and commented on by visitors to the reserve, and I hope they will continue to enrich people's experience of The Pinnacle Nature Reserve. Feedback on the signs has been universally positive and I have been approached by several people from other groups who are interested to hear more about our experience.

The QR codes on the signs link to pages on our website that provide additional and more detailed information, and I want to acknowledge Warren, Alana and Anne for their efforts to ensure that the website information is correct and up to date.

The launch for the signs on April 6th was probably one of the most successful events we've ever held. We got a really good crowd that included local MLAs from Labor and the Greens, representatives from PCS and from Screenmakers, who made the signs, as well as members of three of the local families who were landholders when the reserve was established. Many thanks to everyone who worked so hard to make the event such a success.

Weeding & Biodiversity

Rainfall has been consistently below average for almost every month since this time last year. Only December had a higher-than-average total. As a result, we have seen the abundance of some weeds decline compared with previous years and less abundant vegetation overall. The dry conditions have encouraged some weed species, such as thistles and woody weeds, and discouraged others, such as St Johns Wort. Even so, our weeding teams have spent over 800 hours to the end of April out there either grubbing, slashing or spraying weeds. This is an amazing effort by everyone involved and the reserve is looking lovely as a result. I would also like to acknowledge the assistance of the PCS rangers and contractors for the time they have spent controlling weeds, and African Lovegrass in particular, around the edges of the reserve. Lovegrass continues to be a major threat to biodiversity in the reserve and we need to maintain our vigilance in future years to keep this invasive pest at bay.

The total number of native flora and fauna species observed in the reserve has now risen to 1,062, up from 1,029 this time last year, and the number of native plant species is now 276 (an increase of 6 since last year). The Pinnacle Nature Reserve's Species Richness Score ([SRS](#)) on [NatureMapr](#) continues to increase and we are still ranked 5th out of all the Canberra Nature Reserves.

Hazard Reduction Burn in the Forest

The burn carried out in the Forest block north of the Macrorhyncha Track by the PCS Fire Management Unit on April 8th was a long-planned hazard-reduction measure to remove the dense understory layer that has developed in the Forest block over a long period. After slipping off the list of scheduled burns about 12 years ago, it reappeared last year and has been a fairly high priority for the FMU due to the fire threat posed by so much flammable vegetation so close to the homes bordering the reserve in Hawker.

There are some vegetation communities in that area that we wanted protected, and we gave the FMU Rangers clear guidance of where those areas were. There were also some areas where we were

actually hoping for a fairly hot burn to knock over some invasive acacias that were becoming a nuisance.

Overall, our hope was that the burn would clear the dense thickets of *Cassinia* and *Bursaria* that had taken over much of the woodland and open up that area to allow greater plant diversity. There was a similar burn in the woodland south of the *Macrorhyncha* Track in the early 2000s that has opened up that area beautifully and produced some lovely areas of native wildflowers, including native orchids, which are relatively scarce at The Pinnacle.

Looking at the amount of tree foliage that was scorched, this burn certainly was hotter than we would've liked. But I did note that there were many open areas within the burn that were left untouched, so to some extent it was a "patchy" burn. I also noticed that the Firies took particular care to burn off most of the timber that has fallen over the last decade or so, presumably because they deemed it a fire hazard. At the same time, they also cut down quite a lot of trees, arguably too many, so they've also left a lot of fallen timber that will become valuable habitat in time.

We will of course be monitoring that area carefully in coming years to see what the results of the burn are. There may be (non-native) weeds that will pop up after the fire, and we'll be watching the area carefully to ensure that they are taken care of before they get a foothold in what is really the best part of the whole reserve in terms of ecological value. Hopefully, the fact that the area is generally pretty weed-free will mean that there won't be much non-native seed in the seed bank to spring up post-burn, but I guess we'll find out.

Molonglo 3 Watermain Pipeline Corridor Revegetation

We have made some significant progress with this project over the last year. In Spring, we conducted a couple of plantings in the highly degraded works compound beside the Icon water tanks just off Springvale Drive. One of the plantings was at the southern end of the compound in among the plantings and mulching first done by our erstwhile PCS Ranger Kelzang, and consisted mostly of grasses and other groundcover species. The other planting was at the other end of the compound and is intended to establish mixed clumps of eucalypts and acacias that will lay the groundwork for future soil improvement that will facilitate native grass and forb plantings. I am indebted to Mitchell Kelly and Cybele McNeil for their commitment to watering the trees and shrubs and for replenishing the plantings when the original tubestock died.

In the meantime, we are still working on preparing the fenced plots further down the pipeline corridor for native grass and forb plantings. The prolonged dry weather has discouraged us from making a start on seeding these plots, but I am optimistic that we will get some decent rain soon and be able to proceed.

Weetangera Paddock Revegetation

Len Taylor and his team have worked for many years now to restore native grasses and forbs in Weetangera paddock, with considerable success (and the occasional failure 😊). Len has decided he can no longer propagate his own tubestock from seed and is eager to pass along his collection of plant tubes and frames so that someone else can take on the task. He also has a large stockpile of small wire plant guards that are ideal for protecting planted grasses and forbs. We can either hang on to these guards for our own use or pass them along to other deserving Landcare/ParkCare groups.

Fotpin also has a small free-standing greenhouse for raising and protecting seedlings and we are eager to hear from anyone who might be interested in taking over our seed propagation operation from Len.

Membership

Fotpin membership now stands at 117 (up from 110 last year), and the total number of people on our email contact list is now 363 (up from 349 last year).

Acknowledgements

Thanks to Warren for setting up and running the Zoom session for members who chose to attend the AGM virtually, and my thanks as always to Weetangera Primary School for allowing us to use their staff room for the meeting. And thanks also to everyone who brought along the delicious snacks for afternoon tea.

Cheers,

John Brannan