



fotpin update #27 June 2019

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Most of our activities during the past 12 months have been discussed in our ongoing Updates, which are available on our website, so I will use this opportunity just to briefly summarise the more notable events and achievements since our last AGM in July last year.

Weed Control

Our amazing teams of regular weeders have continued with their excellent work, keeping on top of the reserve's infestations of invasive weeds and keeping an eye on new weed incursions. The web site tells me that this year we clocked up over 670 hours as of last month, not including another 150 hours spent rescuing and relocating native grasses (mostly *Themeda australis*) from the path of the pipeline. The dry start to Spring suppressed to some extent the usual eruptions of introduced grasses, leaving the way clear for the later native grasses to have an excellent season. The good rain in November and December spurred some outstanding growth by native grass species and made walking around the reserve especially enjoyable.

Credit also to ACT Government's Parks & Conservation Service for their help. They recently employed contractors to spray African Love Grass around the perimeter of the reserve and in some areas of the leased land south of the reserve. While the results leave something to be desired, we appreciate any effort PCS is able to make in this regard.

I'd like to thank everyone who helps out with our weed control program, most especially Warren, who does a wonderful job of record-keeping and coordination, as well as keeping our herbicide stores in order and spending hundreds of hours out in the reserve keeping the menace of weeds such as Blackberry, Sweet Briar, St John's Wort, Capeweed and Verbasicum at bay.

Molonglo 3 Watermain Pipeline construction

The contractors have been hard at work this year and we are told that the laying of the pipe is entirely finished now. They are still working on some of the more complex bits of the construction and some of the electrical work. They are about to begin restoring grassed areas in the Bottom Pinnacle, but won't start re-grassing the sections in the reserve for another month or so due to ongoing construction work and the vehicle traffic that will generate. They are also relocating some of the rocks unearthed during the excavations into the Bottom Pinnacle. This is being done to create habitat for Pink-tailed Worm Lizard. They expect most of the onsite work to be completed over the next 4-5 weeks, after which they will remove the fencing. See the [pipeline web page](#) for the latest information.

I also need to note the efforts of John Fitz Gerald and Len Taylor in spearheading efforts to rescue and relocate areas of native grass that were in the path of the pipeline. These efforts are ongoing, as some of the rescued grasses will be used to restore the areas disturbed by the pipeline construction. While I'm on the subject, I should also commend Len and his indefatigable wife Jean for their work in restoring native vegetation in the burnt areas of Weetangera paddock. Len took charge of relocating some of the "rescued" Kangaroo Grass tussocks and other native grasses to new homes in the Weetangera paddock and has been carefully weeding and watering them ever since. He has also propagated a number of native forbs using seed taken from the reserve and has been planting the resulting seedlings back

into denuded patches in the burnt areas of Weetangera paddock. The results are promising and will help to boost diversity in the reserve in years to come.

Displays

We've run displays this year, as usual, at the Joint ParkCare Display at the Jamison Centre in September, the Weetangera Primary School fete in November and the Hawker Primary School fete in April. These displays are one of the best ways we have of telling people about the reserve and what we do, and we invariably get a number of new people who either sign up as members or add their names to our mailing list. My thanks to the many wonderful volunteers who came along and helped to staff our display stalls at the events.

Guided Walks

We held a total of five guided walks at the Pinnacle this year, including the second Aboriginal Heritage Walk with Ngunawal elder Wally Bell in October, a wildflower walk in November and a butterfly walk with Suzi Bond in January. The butterfly walk turned up an unexpected discovery in the shape of several coconut ant nests around the reserve, something that will be well worth keeping an eye on in the spring as coconut ants host several species of rare butterflies.

Clean-up Australia Day

After skipping a year last year, we decided to run another clean-up at the reserve in early March and a dozen or so stalwarts came along to help us collect rubbish from various parts of the reserve. Once again, the bulk of the material was historical remnants such as coils of barbed wire and other fencing, though we did also collect a household safe. Thanks go to everyone who helped out on the day and with the preparations.

Planting Event

In May, we held our first major planting event since 2015, planting 100 tubestock in ten "island" sites in the Bottom Pinnacle. The aim is to create stepping stones that will, in time, help to fill gaps in the woodland corridors that run between the Belconnen Hills reserves and the Molonglo Valley. Around 15 people generously gave their time on the day to help get the plants started, and another dedicated group helped to set up the site in the days leading up to the event. Even the weather chipped in, dumping nearly 20 mm of rain a few days before the planting and another 16 mm a few days after. Elizabeth Smith has written up a more detailed [account of the event](#).

Vegwatch

This is a vegetation monitoring program devised by Sarah Sharp and Lori Gould and run by Sarah herself. It aims to monitor changes in vegetation over time by conducting annual surveys of the plants in a 50x20 metre plot. John Fitz Gerald, Elizabeth Smith and myself have been monitoring a plot that was part of [our first planting](#), sponsored by Spicers Paper, back in 2011. This year, I finally got round to doing a complete survey of all the tubestock we planted in 2011, and I can report that we have managed a survival rate after 7 years of 66%, which is pretty good as these things go.

Pinnacle Extension/Offset

Work on improving the extension is continuing under the new Offsets Ranger, Lexi Williams. The work includes weed spraying, erosion control, revegetation plantings and ecological burns. The burns have been flagged for the coming weeks and could happen pretty much at any time, as conditions are now good, apparently.

Special and Annual General Meetings 2019

The minutes from the combined Special (SGM) and Annual (AGM) Meetings held on Sunday May 19th have been posted in full on the [governance page](#) of our website, but I thought I'd summarise the main points here, since a few important decisions were taken.

The purpose of the SGM was to make some changes to our rules; specifically, to abolish the 2-year limit on committee office bearers holding any of the fotpin offices (Convenor, Coordinator, Treasurer and Secretary), to abolish the Coordinator position and merge its functions into the Convenor position, and to increase the number of ordinary committee positions to account for the lost Coordinator position.

Fifteen members were present for the AGM and they unanimously approved all the proposed changes to the rules.

We then continued on to the AGM, and I introduced our guest speaker, Brett Howland. Brett is a PCS ecologist who has an extensive background in the use of fire as a management tool for grasslands. His talk was extremely interesting and informative, particularly for those of us engaged in rehabilitating the areas burned in last year's hazard reduction burns in the Weetangera and Eastern paddocks.

Brett's remarks were supplemented by comments from Sarah Hnatiuk, Convenor of our neighbouring ParkCare group, the Friends of Mt Painter. She summarised their experience with hazard reduction burns and their own efforts to enrich the recovering grassland areas with plantings of native grasses and forbs.

I'm delighted that both Brett and Sarah were able to make it along to the AGM and would like to thank them both for making the time to share their time and knowledge with us.

The remainder of the AGM was devoted to electing the new Coordinating Committee, as follows:

Convenor: John Brannan

Secretary: Warren Bond

Treasurer: Margo Hellyer

Ordinary Members: Denise Hall, Len Taylor, Alana Wilkes

Members present were asked to consider nominating for the position of Secretary, as Warren already has a lot on his plate as web page creator/editor and in his role coordinating, reporting on and taking part in our weed management program. In the absence of other volunteers for the position, Warren again agreed to act as Secretary until someone else agrees to take on the role.

My thanks to the wonderful folks at Weetangera Primary School for allowing us to use their staff room for the meeting, and to everyone who came along and brought the yummy snacks for afternoon tea. It was heartening to have such a good turnout and I like to think that it bodes well for another successful year for fotpin.

Cheers,

John Brannan
Convenor

June 8th, 2019