



fotpin update #29 November 2019

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I made the mistake the other day of thinking that the start of the new month must mean the first day of Summer. Then I realised that there's still another whole month to go before Summer officially begins! I think anyone could be forgiven for thinking that Summer is already well under way. Several months of below average rainfall are making their mark on the reserve, which is looking dry and tired in many areas with predictions of a hot and dry Summer still to come. The wonderful rain we had on Sunday night will be a big help. Let's hope there's more to come.

Despite the dry, there's been a lot happening at the reserve and elsewhere for the Friends of the Pinnacle.

Joint ParkCare Display at the Jamison Centre

I missed this year's event due to commitments elsewhere, but everyone I've spoken to tells me that it was once again a very successful event. Special thanks this year to Bob for picking up and delivering the display boards used for the event, to Denise for taking over the setup and tear-down duties for our display, and to everyone who helped out with the fotpin display.

Spring Walks Program

- **Bird Walk at the Pinnacle**

A round dozen people came long on this year's walk, which was a little earlier in the season than some previous walks. This turned out well, as many of the resident birds started nesting early this year. Like last year, the low rainfall over the winter and early spring drove some birds up into the mountains, so some of our favourites (the Scarlet Robins in particular) were absent. Even so, it was a lovely morning in near-perfect conditions with some nice birds to be seen. Highlights included both Golden and Rufous Whistlers, White-winged Choughs building their "pudding-bowl" mud nest and the season's first Noisy Friarbirds – one of the migratory species that come to nest in the reserve every year. A particularly lovely bird, the Rainbow Bee-eater (another migrant), was spotted by Alison Milton just minutes after the walk ended and she snapped some excellent photos of the bird (looking a little wind-blown).



Rainbow Bee-eater (photo by Alison Milton)

- **Wildflower Walk**

John Fitz Gerald and Nola McKeown once again led a group of nine walkers on a pleasant stroll through some of the prettier parts of the reserve. I was unable to attend the walk myself, but John tells me that, despite the dry conditions, there were enough flowers in bloom to make the venture very worthwhile. My thanks to John and Nola for again giving up their Sunday morning to conduct the walk.

Molonglo Watermain

An on-site meeting was held on Wednesday October 30th attended by: myself, Warren and John Fitz Gerald for fotpin; Tim Berriman, a Project Manager from Calibre Group overseeing compliance aspects of the pipeline work; Andrew Halley, PCS Ranger in Charge, Northside; and representatives from Wodens, the construction contractor, and Ables, the revegetation contractor.

We had asked for the meeting in order to clarify the details of the revegetation program and also to check on the progress of the revegetation so far. Our own observations had indicated that the survival rate for the tubestock currently planted was poor and that it was getting worse, not better.

The representative from Ables, who are responsible for the 2-year revegetation and maintenance program, assured us that they were aiming for a survival rate of 100%, and that any tubestock that had died since the initial planting would be replaced. He also assured us that the planted areas would be watered fortnightly until the plants were fully established. John Fitz Gerald also pointed out some areas where weeds were already making a comeback, particularly along the newly formed road beside the water tanks, and we were assured that the area would be sprayed for weeds within the next two months.

We were reassured by the commitments made by the contractors and we look forward to seeing better results in the future.

30 Years of ParkCare

This year marks 30 years since ParkCare began in Canberra, and a celebration will be held on Saturday November 9th at the Yarramundi Cultural Centre on Lady Denman Drive, starting at 10 am and finishing with a BBQ lunch provided by the PCS rangers. The event is a chance to look back at the beginnings of the movement and to thank the people who were instrumental in getting it off the ground in Canberra. But it will also be an opportunity to look ahead at the next 30 years and assess some of the challenges we are likely to face, particularly the threats posed by a warmer and dryer climate.

Fotpin will be taking along some display materials from our early days and some photos we have of the activities run by our predecessors, the Pinnacle Environment Group, that helped to transform the reserve from bare sheep paddock into the lovely patchwork woodland that it is today. Everyone is welcome and I hope to see lots of other fotpins at the event. Details, including how to RSVP, can be found at: [30 Years of ParkCare](#).

If you haven't seen it already, there's a short YouTube video compiled to celebrate the ParkCare movement here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tKgE0V3ZhW4>

Weetangera Paddock Revegetation

Len and his team have continued their sterling work in the Weetangera paddock, restoring native vegetation in areas that were cleared by last year's hazard reduction burn. He has now planted over 350 seedlings – mostly Native Weeping Grass (*Microlaena stipoides*) – and just recently planted almost 50 native wildflower seedlings purchased at the recent Greening Australia tubestock sale. Len also had an excellent response to his call for additional helpers to assist with everything from seed collection and propagation through to site preparation and planting. (See fotpin.org.au/ground-cover-restoration-call.html if you missed the call – volunteers always welcome). If all goes well over the summer and Len can raise sufficient seedlings from the seed stocks we already have, we'll be looking to hold a planting event in the Autumn. We'll keep you posted.

New Fencing

Some of you may have noticed that we have some new fencing along the south-eastern edge of the reserve where it borders onto the leased land being used for grazing by the Tully family. This fencing replaces older fencing that has caused issues in the past with livestock straying from Tully's paddocks into the reserve.

Unlike the fencing it replaces, the new section of fencing follows the actual border between the reserve and the leased land, adding (or reclaiming) a thin wedge of land previously on Tully's side of the fence. The upshot of this is that there is now a large gap in the fencing between the reserve and the Bottom Pinnacle. In a discussion with Andrew Halley, PCS Ranger in Charge, Northside, it was decided that we would monitor this gap for the time being and get PCS to close it off only if it proves to be problem in the future. Andrew informed us that fencing contractors would also be replacing the remaining fencing along the southern edge of the Weetangera paddock at some point.

There was an unfortunate incident a few weeks ago in which the contractor replacing the fence left a large section unfinished and cattle from Tully's land strayed into the reserve and did some damage, including pugging along the banks of the creek running down to the dam. The rangers got on top of the situation quickly, but the temporary fencing was then pulled down by someone and the cattle got in again. Hopefully this sort of issue will arise less frequently once the new fencing is in place.

Andrew also promised to talk to the ACT Government's Suburban Land Agency (SLA), who currently control the land being leased by the Tullys, about the rabbit control measures being used on that land with the aim of ensuring that something is done to limit rabbit incursions into the reserve through the new fencing.

Upcoming Events

- **30 Years of ParkCare** – 10 am to lunchtime, Saturday, November 9
(see item 4 [above](#).)

- **Weetangera Primary School Fete** – 10 am to 2 pm, Sunday, November 17

We will again be holding a stall at this year's fete, and I will be sending out a message to everyone in the next few days asking for volunteers to come along and help staff the stall. This is always a lovely event and a really valuable chance to engage with the local community. Please contact John (convenor@fotpin.org.au) if you'd like to get involved.

- **Butterfly Walk** – Date TBD

Local butterfly expert Suzi Bond will again lead a walk at the reserve to seek out our butterflies and some of our other insect species. We haven't set a date for this walk yet, but I will send out a notice as soon as we do. Follow these links for a reminder of what is likely to be seen: [butterfly photo gallery](#); [Pinnacle butterfly list](#).

John Brannan
Convenor

November 6th, 2019