



fotpin update #36 August 2021

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Well, here we are, locked down again. This time last year we were slowly coming out of lockdown, but given the increasingly ominous case numbers coming out of NSW, this time we're likely to stay locked down to some degree for some time to come. As mentioned in our previous email, The Pinnacle is not one of the reserves closed due to the lockdown, but all ParkCare volunteer activities at the reserve are suspended until the lockdown ends.

The lockdown has also caused the cancellation of some events that were scheduled for The Pinnacle and may disrupt more of our Spring events program (see below), but in the meantime, we're keeping our fingers crossed and hoping for the best. The one thing we can all do with impunity is spend our one hour a day of exercise enjoying a brisk walk at the reserve, which is looking especially lovely thanks to several months of good rainfall. The dams in and around the reserve are full to overflowing, the grasses are lush and green, and many of the birds are already busy building their nests.

One especially gratifying development for fotpin in recent months came in the shape of Anne Aisbett putting her hand up not only to join the fotpin Coordinating Committee, but also to generously offer her services as Secretary. We are delighted to have Anne on the committee fulfilling this important role for fotpin.

Molonglo 3 Watermain Pipeline Revegetation

Earlier this month, you may have noticed some work going on in the compound beside the big Icon water tanks on Springvale Drive. We have been asking the Parks and Conservation Service (PCS) for several years to remove and/or remediate the piles of gravel and assorted construction waste that have been piled up around the edges of this compound. I'm delighted to say that (finally) they are not only removing the waste material, but are also going to lay down a thick layer of topsoil and mulch and then revegetate the bare areas where the piles used to be. I want to take this opportunity to thank our tireless PCS ranger Kelzang Tshering for pushing this job through against considerable resistance and for sticking around on site to make sure it gets done right. There may even be an opportunity for fotpin volunteers to help with the revegetation work in the months to come.

There has also been some progress on the planning of ongoing revegetation of the lower part of the pipeline – the section referred to as Area 2 that runs from the track intersection west of the dam to the southern boundary of the reserve. The ACT Government has selected Glascott Landscape Management as the contractor to try to restore native groundcover along that section of the pipeline corridor, and an on-site meeting was scheduled for August 13th to meet with the contractor and with representatives from PCS and other concerned ACT government agencies to discuss the specifics of the approach to be used. Obviously, that meeting has now been postponed until we come out of lockdown.

We have also been told that the promised funding for fotpin to re-seed native groundcover vegetation on the upper section of the pipeline has been released and will be transferred into an account for us to access as needed. This will give us the capability to purchase seeds that we can sow when conditions are suitable, as well as possibly setting up seed "hubs" where we can grow native groundcover species as a future source of seed.

Upcoming Events

Before the lockdown, Spring was shaping up to be a busy time for fotpin volunteers. As well as ongoing weed control, several events are scheduled for the season, as outlined below, but

all of these are now subject to the lockdown being lifted on September 2nd. We will keep members posted on cancellations as soon as we hear about them ourselves.

- *Jamison Centre Joint ParkCare Display – 9 am to 4 pm, September 3rd to 5th*

This public event is a chance for fotpin and the other local ParkCare and related community groups to showcase their reserves and the work they do on those reserves. This year's event promises to be the biggest yet and will include displays by the Friends of Black Mountain, the Friends of Aranda Bushland, the Friends of Mt Painter (Cook), the Friends of Grasslands, the Ginninderra Catchment Group, the Southern Tablelands Ecosystems Park (Arboretum), the Molonglo Catchment Group and the Canberra Indian Myna Action Group. A number of volunteers have already signed up to the online roster to help staff the stall, but we would welcome more, subject to the lockdown being lifted in time. You can volunteer using the [online roster](#) (or call John on 0405 331 405).

- *Pinnacle Bird Walk (1) – 9.00 am, Sunday September 5th, Dungowan St, Hawker*

John Brannan will be leading two bird walks this spring, the first of which will be focusing on the breeding activity by the reserve's resident birds, as well as the arrival of the early spring migrants. With the vegetation on the reserve in outstanding condition, this year promises to be an excellent breeding year for our local birds.

- *Pinnacle Wildflower Walk – 9.00 am, Sunday October 3rd, De Salis St entrance, Weetangera*

Once again, we are fortunate to have John Fitz Gerald and Nola McKeon as leaders for our wildflower walk. Last year's walk was outstanding and this year's walk promises to be even better, with the excellent rainfall setting us up for a bumper season.

- *Pinnacle Bird Walk (2) – 9.00 am, Sunday October 31st, Dungowan St, Hawker*

The second bird walk at the Pinnacle this spring is timed to coincide with the breeding season for the migratory birds who come to the reserve to nest each spring. Last year was an especially busy season for some species and this year looks like being even better.

- *Weetangera Primary School Fete – 10 am to 2 pm, Sunday November 21st*

After the cancellation of last year's fete due to COVID-19, WPS have decided to try again this year and we are very happy to be able to support the school by holding a display stall as part of the fete. This is an important opportunity for the Friends of the Pinnacle to reach out to the local community and increase their awareness of what the reserve has to offer, as well as the work we do to maintain and improve its condition. We will be providing an online roster for people to sign up to closer to the date.

Weetangera Paddock Revegetation Project

Len's team is continuing with their steadfast work on seeding and planting bare areas in Weetangera paddock. Ongoing attacks by plastic-eating rabbits (really!) have forced a bit of a re-think on how best to protect the seedlings, but solutions are being found, with the generous assistance of our ParkCare ranger, Marty Bajt.

St Francis Xavier College have been kind enough to look after well over a hundred native wildflower seedlings in their greenhouse, and these will add to the wildflower seedlings already in the ground. You may have noticed some of the seedlings that Len and his team have planted along the southern edge of the Springvale track. One of the species planted is Yellow Burr Daisy (*Calotis lappulaceae*) and our hope is that these native plants will take the place of the Capeweed (*Arctotheca calendula*), an introduced species that occurs mainly along track edges and has the same seed dispersal method as the Yellow Burr Daisy.

Collaboration with St Francis Xavier College

After a few rain-enforced delays, we finally were able to welcome a group of 19 students from St Francis Xavier College to the reserve on July 22nd. Our task for the morning was to collect

all the tree guards and stakes along the upper section of the revegetation corridor for the Molonglo watermain, including the large compound next to the large water tanks in Weetangera. The students cleared the entire area of guards and stakes in very short order, putting all the plastic tree guards into bags for collection by ParkCare Ranger Marty Bajt, who took them away for recycling. For the next visit, the students will repeat the procedure at the bottom end of watermain corridor so that the entire revegetation area will be cleared of guards and stakes. This is particularly welcome as many of the guards used are starting to decompose and break up, creating untidy plastic litter around the reserve.

We are delighted to have such a constructive and productive relationship with the college, not just for the positive outcomes it yields for the reserve, but also for the opportunity it offers to raise awareness among the students of the reserve and the work we do there. My thanks again to Tim Gill for spearheading the collaboration, to Gilbert Hughes and SFX teacher Melanie Monaghan for coordinating the student visits to the reserve and to Len Taylor for his work with the school on raising native wildflower seedlings.

Top-up Planting in the Bottom Pinnacle

We were recently informed by the PCS that some funding was available from a local service provider, Soroptimist International (SI), who are celebrating their one-hundred-year anniversary this year and want to plant 100 trees as part of that celebration. As this coincided with a plant sale by Greening Australia, I seized the opportunity to pick up 20 mixed eucalypts and shrubs that we can use to fill in the gaps that have appeared in the island plantings we established in the Bottom Pinnacle in May 2019. Keep an eye out for a call for volunteers to help with putting the new plants in the ground once we are out of lockdown.

National Landcare Awards

The National Landcare Awards are handed out every second year, alternating with the local Landcare Awards. This year was the turn of the national awards, with this year's awards ceremony on August 5 being conducted virtually due to the NSW and Victorian COVID lockdowns. Last year's local ACT award winners were invited to attend a small gathering at the Press Club in Barton, where we watched the national awards ceremony, MC'd brilliantly by Costa Georgiadis, on a giant TV screen. I'm delighted to say that two of the local ACT Landcare Award winners were successful in also winning the National Landcare Award in their respective categories. They were Dhani Gilbert, who won the Austcover Young Landcare Leadership Award, and the Red Hill Bush Regeneration Group, who won the Australian Community Media Community Group Award. Both were very worthy winners and are to be congratulated on their success! This is particularly remarkable as only one ACT Award winner has gone on to win the National Award before this, so two National Award winners in one night is a terrific achievement. Let's hope we can achieve similar results in future National Landcare Awards!

John Brannan
Convenor

August 23rd 2021



Appearance of Billy button (*Craspedia variabilis*) flower stalks in August promises another great wildflower season on The Pinnacle [photo: Warren Bond]