



fotpin update #39 June 2022

2021-22 Annual Report

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2021-22 has been a disastrous year in many respects – violent storms, torrential rain, flooding and rampant weed growth to name a few. But it has also been a wonderful one in other ways – unprecedented flourishing of orchids and wildflowers, a prolonged and fruitful breeding season among many bird species, and a huge year for butterflies, insects and, of course, frogs. Even the disasters had a silver lining. Some of the trees knocked over by the storm in early January were converted by the PCS Fire Management Unit into beautiful benches near the reserve entrance on Dungowan Street.



photo: John Brannan

I think we all hoped that COVID would be a thing of the past by now, but many of us are still very concerned about it and reluctant to take risks. It may be that the “new normal”, as it has become known, will be a life where we travel less and spend less time in the company of others. All the more important then, that we have places like the Pinnacle where we can get out and enjoy ourselves in the outside world.

Weed Management

Like last year, we have again been overwhelmed by rampant weed growth in the reserve. The sheer volume of weeds forced us to prioritize our weeding activity, particularly our spraying, and focus on areas with high conservation values. We have also confined ourselves to the more threatening weeds, such as St. John’s Wort and Verbascum, that have the potential to out-compete native vegetation and even other exotic species. You might have noticed the tall stands of fleabane that have done so well this year. While unsightly, fleabane is not currently

thought to pose a long-term problem, so we have not devoted much effort to controlling it, except in areas with very high conservation values. In all, our weeders have clocked up an impressive 800 hours of effort since July last year and I would like to take this opportunity to say how much we all appreciate the effort they put in, week in, week out, all year round. For details see [weeding effort](#) on our web site which will be updated to include the whole season in July.

Pinnacle Events

While COVID restrictions have forced us to restrict some of our activities over the last year, there has still been a succession of events hosted by fotpin at the reserve. In addition to the customary Spring Wildflower walk and our Spring and Autumn birdwatching walks, we also welcomed a visit by the Hawker Junior Guides in March, guided walks for the Canberra Ornithologists Group in August last year and the end of May this year, and a Wellbeing walk in March promoting mental health and mindfulness sponsored by Landcare ACT. Fotpin members also participated in surveys of Superb Parrots and Gang Gang Cockatoos conducted at the reserve during the Spring and Summer.



A "fan-tailed" Eastern Rosella spotted on our Autumn bird walk
(photo: Alison Milton)



Donkey Orchids (*Diuris sp.*) flourished this year
(photo: Ian McMahon)

We were also invited to participate in two Open Days held by the Hawker Community Gardens group, who are establishing a community garden in the car parks opposite Hawker shops. These events have proven to be an excellent way to reach out to the local community and raise awareness of the reserve and the treasures it has to offer. This has to some degree made up for the cancellation of the local primary school fetes and the annual Joint ParkCare Display at the Jamison Centre due to COVID.

One piece of recent good news is that Weetangera Primary School have decided to go ahead with their School Fete this year after two years of cancelled events. The fete is scheduled for Sunday December 4th and we have again been invited to hold an information stall. So mark the date in your diary and watch out for a call for volunteers to help with the stall closer to the date.

PCS and ParkCare News

The land manager for the Pinnacle Nature Reserve is the ACT Government's Parks and Conservation Service (PCS), and we have to seek their approval for any activity we undertake at the reserve. This year, PCS made three new appointments that directly impact on us. The first was the appointment of a new Volunteer Programs Manager, who supervises the ParkCare Rangers and oversees and coordinates all the volunteer activities in PCS-managed

reserves. There was a very strong field of candidates for this position, but the successful applicant was Lauren McQueen, who we are delighted to welcome as our guest speaker at this year's AGM.

The other two important appointments were the selection of two ParkCare Rangers, one each for the Northside and Southside reserves. Only one of the positions is permanent, but we very much hope that the second position will also become permanent in time. Those of you who know the current ParkCare Ranger, Marty Bajt, might be wondering why PCS needs to hire a permanent ParkCare Ranger when they already have one. But the truth is that Marty has only been "acting" in that position for the last four years! So, it should be no surprise that Marty was selected as the successful applicant for the permanent position and will continue to be our ParkCare Ranger, since he has opted to take up the Northside position. The second ranger, in the Southside position, is Tenzin Phuntso, who (like our current District Ranger Kelzang) is from Bhutan and brings an absolutely amazing breadth of experience to his new role. If Marty were not such an outstanding ranger, I would certainly be envious of the Southside ParkCare groups getting such a capable and personable ParkCare Ranger. We wish both the "new" ParkCare Rangers every success in their roles.

Molonglo 3 Watermain Corridor Revegetation

Revegetation of the upper section of the pipeline corridor has now been officially handed over to us, with additional restoration work now completed along the Valley track from the 4-ways junction down to the Tully Boundary track. We held a planting event last November in the large compound beside the Icon water tanks at the top end of the corridor. The aim of the planting was to supplement the original revegetation work, almost all of which had died. So far, most of what we planted has survived well and some of the plants are even flowering and setting seed. We also asked renowned ecologist Reiner Rehwinkel to visit the site last October and offer his views on how we might proceed with the revegetation work. We currently have an order with Greening Australia for more grass and forb seed, which we will use to establish trial revegetation plots along the pipeline corridor next Spring. Depending on the results of the trials, we will use the funding we received from the ACT Government to make future seed purchases for more large-scale revegetation. This is an ongoing project that will continue for some years to come, and I encourage anyone interested in getting involved to get in touch.



A couple of volunteers hard at work at our planting event

(Photo: John Brannan)

Other Revegetation

On this topic, Len Taylor and his team have continued with their efforts promoting the restoration of native grasses and forbs both inside and outside exclosures in the Weetangera

paddock. Len takes a considered and methodical approach to the revegetation work and the development of grasses and wildflowers already happening in his plots is very encouraging.

Reserve Biodiversity

The tally of native Australian flora and fauna species observed at the reserve is now up to 862 (including 115 birds, 242 plants and 350 insects!). We owe a huge debt of gratitude to Alison Milton for recording many of these species, particularly the insects. You can find her observations (and many more) on [Canberra Nature Map](#). Thanks also to Warren for all his work compiling the observations (including some of his own) for the [flora and fauna](#) pages on our website.

Kama Link Paddock (formerly the Pinnacle Extension)

Administration of this area was formally handed over to the local PCS district rangers this year and the renamed Kama Link paddock is now just one more part of the reserve. The PCS Offsets team did some sterling restoration work while they were managing the area, but it still has some areas of serious weed infestation that we will need to watch. However, as anyone who has attended one of our Wildflower walks will know, it also holds one of the loveliest patches of native grassland in the entire reserve and is full of native wildflowers that put on a spectacular show in the Spring.

Grant Applications

We submitted two grant applications during the latest round of ACT Government Environmental grants this year. One of the applications was for funding to design, fabricate and install some interpretive signage for the reserve, which we are sorely lacking. The other grant was submitted by Len Taylor to fund some additional fencing and other resources for the revegetation work in Weetangera paddock. Both applications made strong cases and were backed by the Ginninderra Catchment Group, so we were optimistic that they would be successful. I'm now delighted to be able to say that both applications were successful!! My thanks to Kat and the team at GCG for their help in putting together the submissions.

Membership

Our membership and the number of people on our mailing list have continued to grow over time. Net membership is now up to 108 and the total number of people on our email contact list has now reached 329.

AGM (& SGM)

This year's AGM was held at Weetangera Primary School on Sunday May 15th and was immediately preceded by a Special General Meeting to consider some changes to the fotpin Management Rules. The meetings were open to people both in person and virtually (via "Zoom Cloud Meetings"), and were attended by 14 members plus our guest speaker, Lauren McQueen, who has been the Volunteer Programs Manager at PCS since November 2021.

The purpose of the SGM was primarily to make it explicit in the Management Rules that fotpin is a not-for-profit organization. This is required for us to retain our current "fotpin.org.au" domain name under recently changed rules governing the au domain. We also made a small change to the date on which our financial year begins and ends to more closely align it with the timing of the AGM. Details can be found in the [SGM Minutes and accompanying documents](#). Suffice it to say that the motions to amend the Management Rules were carried unanimously by the members present.

The [AGM](#) then commenced with the presentation of my Convenor's Report and the Treasurer's Report including the consideration and acceptance of the audited Annual Financial Statement. This was followed by election of the Coordinating Committee for the coming year, as follows:

Convenor: John Brannan

Secretary: Anne Aisbett

Treasurer: Mike Hall

Ordinary Members: Warren Bond, Denise Hall, Len Taylor, Alana Wilkes (co-opted)

My particular thanks to Keith Thomas for standing in as Returning Officer at very short notice and doing it very competently.

Our guest speaker, Lauren McQueen spoke about her background in volunteer management, and her experience in the PCS since joining in November 2021. She outlined her responsibilities in managing the four streams of volunteers in the PCS and her current work in reviewing the policies and insurance arrangements for the volunteer streams. Lauren stressed the importance of advocating upwards for volunteers and mentioned recent work for the Annual Report that calculated the value of the efforts of PCS volunteers at \$1.5 million for the year.

In response to questions from the floor, Lauren described her experiences in talking to volunteers and visiting ParkCare sites to better understand volunteer needs. There was also some discussion around the method used in calculating the dollar value of volunteer efforts and improving how this data was collected.

We greatly appreciate the effort Lauren made in joining us via Zoom as our Guest Speaker. She has shown herself to be a particularly competent Programs Manager and her background in working with volunteers has given her an excellent understanding of and appreciation for the efforts of environmental volunteers.

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. Thanks also to Warren for setting up and running the Zoom session for members who chose to attend the two meetings virtually.

John Brannan
Convenor

28 June 2022