



fotpin update #41 November 2022

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You may have noticed that it has been raining rather a lot just recently. My rain gauge here in Florey has so far recorded 102 mm in November, which follows totals of 205 mm in October, 95 mm in September and 156 mm in August. This means that we've had the equivalent of around 10 months' worth of rain in the last 4 months. And they tell us that there's more to come. True, our troubles pale into insignificance compared with the repeated flooding faced by so many people to our north and west, but the muddy ground and bogged tracks are a major inconvenience for our weeding teams. All vehicle access into the reserve has been restricted until further notice, which may be a while coming.

That said, the reserve is looking especially lovely, with yet another excellent season for the reserve's native wildflowers and orchids. The birds also are busy breeding, with the reserve already host to several pairs of breeding summer migrants. And the last three months have been ideal growing conditions for our ongoing revegetation work in the reserve, as outlined below.

Pipeline Corridor Trial Seeding



Some of the volunteers hard at work

Photo: John Brannan

On September 7th, a small group of volunteers began preparing the ground and scattering seed for a small revegetation trial in the Icon water tanks compound at the top end of the pipeline corridor. We have some funding for revegetation along the corridor, and the aim of this trial is to identify the factors that will ensure the highest possible germination and survival rates for native grasses and forbs in the admittedly fairly hostile conditions of the compound. The outcomes of the trial will inform subsequent large-scale seeding of the entire

compound in coming years. For the purposes of this trial, we purchased approximately 2 kg of native grass and forb seed from Greening Australia, which was mixed together and combined with propagating sand to allow relatively easy hand sowing in four prepared plots.

The raking to prepare the plots was pretty hard work, and I am very grateful to the brave souls who applied themselves to the task with such enthusiasm. We hope that the results will reward their efforts in coming months. We certainly couldn't ask for better revegetation conditions!

Joint ParkCare Display at Jamison Centre

After the cancellation of last year's event due to COVID, it was good to be able to be a part of this year's joint ParkCare display at the Jamison Centre in Macquarie. Over the three days of the event, from September 16-18, there was a great deal of interest shown by the local shoppers and other visitors, even more than in previous years, if anything. The groups taking part included our neighbouring "Friends of" groups from Mt Painter, Aranda Bushland and Black Mountain, as well as the Friends of Grasslands, Ginninderra Catchment Group and the Southern Tablelands Ecosystems Park (STEP) group from the National Arboretum. It was also good to see so much of our tireless ParkCare Ranger Marty Bajt at the display. Marty gave up much of his weekend to be at the display and also contributed some highly visible signage to alert people to the purpose of the display.



This event continues to be an important opportunity to connect with people in the local community and to showcase our reserves and the work that ParkCare groups and other organisations do in maintaining and improving the ecological values of those reserves.

My thanks to everyone who came along and helped out with staffing our part of the display over the three days. Thanks also to Jean Geue and Linda Beveridge for their hard work as the principal organisers for the event.



Guided Walks



Birders heading home from the summit

Photo: John Brannan

While we no longer have to contend with COVID restrictions on our guided walks program, this year has posed other obstacles in the form of inclement weather and flooded tracks. While this did not significantly impact the first of my bird walks this spring, it did necessitate a change to the route normally taken for the wildflower walk since the usual tracks in the

Kama Link paddock were too boggy to walk. In fact, even getting to the entrance into that paddock was strictly gumboots only.

The **first bird walk**, on September 18th, was very fortunately held under rare blue skies, albeit rather windy. We had a couple of late cancellations, so we set off with just 10 people. We spotted a total of 26 species during the walk, the highlights being a pair of Yellow-rumped Thornbills busy nest-building, Magpies sitting on a nest and, in a new record for the reserve, a pair of Grey Butcherbirds with a nest. (The nest went on to produce three very healthy looking chicks.)



Happy birders waiting for the next bird

Photo: John Brannan

The **wildflower walk** on October 29th focused on the rocky ridge on the slope to the east of the reserve dam. This has always been one of the most floristically rich areas in the reserve, and so it proved on the day of the walk, with over 40 species of native grasses and wildflowers spotted during the walk. One outstanding highlight was an enormous swathe of Bulbine Lilies (*Bulbine bulbosa*) just coming into flower – more than this observer has ever seen in one spot. Many thanks to John Fitz Gerald for being our highly informative guide on the walk, and our commiserations to Nola McKeon, who was to be one of our guides and had to pull out due to a badly injured shoulder. We hope it heals up well and Nola can get back to a two-handed life again soon.

The **second bird walk** of the season finally took place on November 20th, postponed a week due to (you guessed it) heavy rain on the original planned date of the 13th. Conditions were a little windier than the 11 walkers would've liked, but the showers mercifully held off and the birds were very cooperative, with a small flock of gorgeous Superb Parrots kicking off proceedings while we were still in the car park. I started this walk from the Springvale Drive car park in Weetangera with the aim of focusing on the area around the dam, which has been a key nesting area for our migratory species for the last few years. Highlights of the walk included several pairs of Leaden Flycatchers, one pair busy building a new nest, Noisy Friarbirds also nest building, two pairs of Magpie Larks with nests -- one with a fairly well grown chick, Olive-backed Orioles, and Willie Wagtails with a newly completed nest. A total of 22 species were observed during the walk, which is fewer than we would normally see, but a respectable total given the blustery conditions.



Male (L) and female Leaden Flycatchers

Photo: Alison Milton

Magpie Lark chick in the nest

Photo: Alison Milton

Hawker College Tree Planting

On October 17th, Hawker College held their annual Tree Day, including a tree planting ceremony attended by Canberra's Deputy Chief Minister, Yvette Berry, who is a former Hawker College student. The Friends of The Pinnacle were also invited to assist with the tree planting. On the day, there was a works crew digging holes with a mechanised augur and plenty of willing students eager to do the hard work, so we had to content ourselves with overseeing a few of the plantings and correcting the occasional mistake. It was interesting to see the students at work and to be a part of what has obviously become a regular and very popular event at the college. Our thanks to the event coordinator, Liz Ahern, for inviting us.

Interpretive Signage at The Pinnacle

You may recall that we were successful in obtaining an ACT Government Environment grant to fund the design, fabrication and installation of several interpretive signs around the reserve. A small working group is now busy on the design process for these signs, and we are delighted to be working with Suzanne Richardson, Communications Officer at Ginninderra Catchment Group, who has an extensive background in graphic design. Our current plans involve placing two large signs at the Dungowan St and Springvale Drive reserve entrances, a panorama sign on the summit of the Pinnacle, and either 2 or 3 trackside information signs at particularly interesting or noteworthy spots in the reserve. The working group would love to hear from anyone in the fotpin community who would like to contribute to the process. We

are especially interested in suggestions for sign locations or content. If you have a comment or suggestion, just contact me at convenor@fotpin.org.au.

Other News

- **Weetangera Primary School Fete, Sunday December 4th, 10 am to 2 pm**
After being forced to cancel for the last few years due to COVID, Weetangera Primary are finally able to hold their popular spring fete again this year. As usual, we will be holding a display stall at the fete, and I will be emailing the membership very shortly asking for volunteers to help staff the stall on the day. Watch this space!
- Those of you who regularly access the Weetangera end of the reserve would doubtless have noticed the new hardened surface in the **car park off Springvale Drive**, as well as the extensive mulching in the areas cordoned off by the boulders. This was long overdue as the car park was in a shocking state, and we are grateful to Ranger Kelzang and his team for finally getting this done.
- Our **weeding** teams clocked up an impressive 177 hours of effort over the last 3 months, which is almost double the figure for the same period last year. This included spraying Verbascum and St. John's Wort in areas not prioritised in peak season, and spraying exotic grasses and miscellaneous broadleaf weeds in Weetangera paddock prior to planting in September. Given that this spring is once again a bumper season for weeds, we will again now be focussing our efforts on the areas of highest conservation value in the reserve. Details of [weeding effort](#) are updated quarterly.
- Our **new brochures** for the reserve have finally arrived. After some delays due to a mix-up with the printers, ParkCare Ranger Marty finally dropped round a box containing our allotted 750 copies of the new brochure. It has been available as a [download](#) from our website for several weeks already, but it is nice to have the paper copies in time for the Weetangera Primary School fete on December 4th.
- We were recently contacted by the Office of the Commissioner for Sustainability and the Environment, who are putting together the **2023 ACT State of the Environment Report**, which will include some discussion of the application of offsets in the ACT. They were interested in meeting with us to discuss our experience of the offset process from the perspective of community members. Warren and I met with Serena Farrelly from the Commissioner's Office on October 5th and spent an hour outlining our experience of the offset process, both the good and the bad. Serena assured us that our contribution would be run past us before it appears in the final report.
- On September 5th, Warren met on the reserve with our Ranger Kelzang to discuss possible **improvements to the equestrian signage** on the reserve. This is in response to increasing instances of horses being ridden along tracks where they should not go. (Horses are only permitted on the Springvale track along the northern edge of the reserve, along the Boundary track around the southern edge and along the ACTEW Pump Track, as already indicated by current signs.) Kelzang has some more signs ready to erect at strategic points around the reserve and we hope to see them in place as soon as the tracks have dried out enough for vehicles to access the reserve.
- We recently received a copy of the **draft Landscape Improvement Implementation Plan** (LIP) for The Pinnacle Nature Reserve. These are being done for most reserves and our plan was put together by Lori Gould of Grassroots Environmental. It summarizes the current state of the reserve, classifies different areas of the reserve according to weed control priority, and sets out a number of specific on-ground works recommendations. We will be discussing the plan at our upcoming Annual Planning Meeting with the PCS rangers and identifying which of the proposed measures will be undertaken by the rangers, and which by fotpin. I am hoping that the plan will be available on our website once it is finalized.

- The 251st plant has been added to The Pinnacle Native Species list. A small patch of the lovely "Milkmaids" (*Burchardia umbellate*), an uncommon lily species, was found recently.



Photo: Warren Bond

John Brannan
Convenor

22 November 2022



Sticky everlasting (*Xerochrysum viscosum*) and Bluebells (*Wahlenbergia stricta*) in the Hawker paddock

Photo: Warren Bond