



fotpin update #43 June 2023

2022-23 Annual Update

As we head into Winter, the AGM is out of the way and we can look back over the last 12 months. In many ways, the 2022-23 year has been a rerun of the previous year, albeit slightly less extreme. We again had abundant rainfall for most of the year, some astonishing displays of native daisies and other wildflowers, and rampant weed growth, especially St. John's Wort, blackberry and a whole suite of woody weeds. And we're still not out of the COVID-19 woods. If anything, it seems to be getting worse again just recently, perhaps partly because we're no longer taking it as seriously as we once did. This more relaxed approach has meant that a lot of the events that were cancelled in the last few years were revived this year, including the Joint ParkCare Display weekend at Jamison and the Weetangera School Fete. Our guided walks programs were well attended, and we also hosted several walks for other groups, including the Canberra Ornithologists and the U3A Nature & Wellbeing walk run by Landcare ACT. We also helped out with the Annual Tree Day at Hawker College in October last year. The key highlights of the year are summarised below.



Bluebells and Everlastings on the edge of the Macrorhyncha woodland

photo: Warren Bond

Weed Management

Our weeding teams have clocked up 943 hours spent controlling weeds in the reserve between July last year and the end of May this year. This is an enormous effort and I'd like to take this opportunity to thank everyone on the weeding teams for all their hard work. And there are signs that our effort is yielding positive benefits. Briar prevalence is now down to just 3.7 per ha compared with 44 per ha 10 years ago, despite a bumper year for woody weeds, and the similarly rampant St. John's Wort appears to be declining in areas where we have sprayed regularly. Verbascum also seems to be back under control; after its resurgence in the very wet seasons of 2020 and 2021, there is much less this year despite a similar amount of rainfall. I particularly want to thank Warren, not only for the huge amounts of time

he spends out in the reserve spraying weeds, but also for his work maintaining our spraying equipment, mixing and supplying herbicides to those who use them and coordinating and logging the effort put in by all our weeders. For more information see the [summary of weeding effort](#) for this season so far.



Everlastings on the edge of the Macrorhyncha woodland

photo: Warren Bond

Biodiversity

Warren also maintains the list of [flora and fauna](#) species recorded on the reserve and thanks to this effort we know that the reserve is home to an amazing 917 native species. This includes 266 native plant species, 24 of which have been added in the last 12 months. Highlights included a rare/uncommon lily species (Milkmaids), a sensitive fern species and a number of new locations of a rare/uncommon *Dianella* lily species (all shown below). He's also been mapping native plant species across the reserve, giving us a much better understanding of the distribution of species and quantifying the areas with the highest diversity. We currently know of 3 very rare/threatened* species, 6 rare or uncommon* species and 21 sensitive* species on the reserve (* as defined by Canberra Nature Map). Thank you Warren!



Dianella sp. aff. *Longifolia* (Benambra) (Pale flax lily), *Burchardia umbellate* (Milkmaids) and *Pellaea falcata* (Sickle fern)
photos: Warren Bond

Farewell Kelzang

Our Ranger for the last 3 years has been the indefatigable Kelzang Tschering and we have been very fortunate to have such a dedicated and hard-working ranger helping us on the reserve. However, Kelzang met with me about a month or so ago to let me know that he is finally moving on. He will be joining the Offsets team where he will gain valuable knowledge and experience. His place has now been taken by Julian Lolicato, a recent recruit to the Northside district ranger team. We wish Kelzang well in his new position and look forward to working with Julian in the months and (hopefully!) years to come.

Molonglo Watermain Corridor Revegetation

Our efforts to promote native groundcover in the compound beside the Icon water tanks have yielded very limited success so far, and this has forced us to reconsider how best to use the funding we were given for this revegetation work. We are confident that we can improve on what has been done previously and will continue to look for effective ways to restore native vegetation along the pipeline corridor.

Weetangera Paddock Revegetation

Len Taylor and his team continue to work on promoting the restoration of native grasses and forbs both inside and outside exclosures in the Weetangera paddock. Len was successful in obtaining an ACT Government Environment Grant this year and has been using the funding to build additional exclosures where he is having considerable success restoring native grasses and forbs. He and his team are to be congratulated for their efforts and the positive outcomes they are achieving.

New Pinnacle Brochure

With funding from PCS, we were able to get a new batch of brochures printed earlier this year. The new brochures feature a new cover image, updated information and an updated reserve map that includes the new Kama Link paddock (formerly referred to as the Pinnacle Extension or Pinnacle Offset). As well as the printed copies it is also [available as a pdf](#).

Charitable Status

For administrative reasons, we applied for and received registration with the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission. This makes little difference to our how we operate, but it does mean that we can continue to use “.org.au” domain for our email and website addresses.

Interpretative Signage

The other ACT Government Environment Grant we received this year was funding for the fabrication and installation of several interpretive information signs around the reserve. Our grant application proposed the installation of two large entrance signs (one at Dungowan St in Hawker and the other in the Springvale Drive car park opposite De Salis St in Weetangera), one large panorama sign to go on the Pinnacle summit, and either two or three trackside signs. Our current plans for the trackside signs are to install one in the Forest and another beside the dam, and the design work for these signs is now largely complete. The two entrance signs will each have a map of the reserve showing suggested walks for reserve visitors, together with a welcome to the reserve in English and Ngunawal language. The design work for these signs is also well under way. The design work for the summit panorama sign is still in progress, though we already have a general idea of what the sign will include.

Just recently, one of our members very generously offered to fund an additional trackside sign, and we are currently considering where to site the sign and what information to include. At this stage, we are strongly considering locating the sign at the turnoff to the Kama Link paddock near the 5-ways junction, but we are open to suggestions. I'd like to take this opportunity to thank our Secretary Anne Aisbett and Coordinating Committee member Alana Wilkes, who have been part of the team working hard on developing and designing these signs. We are hoping that we will have the new signs completed and installed well before Christmas.

Membership

Fotpin membership has increased slightly this year to 110, and the total number of people on our email contact list has now climbed to around 330.

2023 Annual General Meeting

We held our AGM on Sunday May 21st at Weetangera Primary School as usual, and 10 members attended in person, with Warren opting to attend via Zoom. We also welcomed Peter Cain MLA and our speaker, Dr Rosie Cooney, who was Director of Conservation Research for the ACT Government and will now head up the new EPSDD Office of Nature Conservation (ONC), which will incorporate Conservation Research.

Rosie outlined her role in EPSDD in the new Office of Nature Conservation, which is designed to bring policy and research together, and is responsible for driving change in the ACT government's approach to biodiversity conservation. She spoke of how a major challenge facing us is climate change, and noted that projected global average surface temperatures must be multiplied by a factor of 1.4 to provide projections for land temperature changes in Australia. This means that we now face 2.8 to 3 degrees of temperature rise under even very optimistic scenarios. We are already seeing the impacts of this, such as the two major burns of Namadgi within 17 years.

Rosie noted that in the future we will face more extreme changes and challenges, and this will be reflected in the composition of species present in the ACT. Part of the role of the new Office will be to prepare for uncertainty and for rapid responses to large-scale change. We are at an early stage of adaptation planning in the nature conservation space. In other areas, the government is more advanced –the government's Living Infrastructure Plan (led by a different part of the Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development Directorate) to plant trees to ameliorate urban heating is one example of such an adaptation strategy.

The Office of Nature Conservation is working with Mike Dunlop in the CSIRO on organisational adaptation. One outcome of this is the development of a Climate Adaptation for Nature Initiative which will use case studies into particular areas; the first area to be looked at is planned burning. Rosie noted that one of the key challenges is to question our conservation objectives, as the species in the ACT will be changing, and ecosystem resilience and animal movements may become more relevant than threatened species lists to our work in conservation. This raises the question of our deeper objectives and values given the changing environment.

In response to a question from John, Rosie noted that there is a 'Connecting Nature, Connecting People' initiative aimed at mapping connectivity corridors within the city, restoring priority sites, and so forth. She noted the tensions associated with this, including the rapidly growing population of Canberra and pressure from developers, which will be addressed by including viable connectivity corridors into strategic planning processes. As part of this, there is a publicly available Ecological Network Dashboard which maps animal needs by taxa based on existing vegetation. There is funding available for community groups to work on restoring these habitats. Len queried whether there will be similar information on seed dispersal; Rosie replied that there was not, this was a big gap but highly complex. John questioned whether fotpin should consider using different plant species for revegetation projects. Rosie replied that there was some modelling on what plants would do best in the future, but not at a fine enough scale to be useful yet. New modelling will be run this year by the NSW and Australian Regional Climate Modelling (NARClIM) initiative of the NSW government.

Rosie remarked that her Office would like to work with ParkCare groups on planning future scenarios. John noted that Parkcare groups would like a strategic planting guide, and Rosie said that this would be developed, especially for trees. ACT Gov is currently running provenance trials on Red Gum species from hotter areas to see if they can succeed in the ACT. Some other ANU work has revealed that the genome for some eucalypt species is the same throughout most of NSW, which indicates that those species should be already well-adapted to climate variation.

Asked about first nations' fire management approaches, Rosie noted that risk management was an issue, and the government is currently exploring approaches working with the

Ngunawal community. It may be helpful to look at NSW processes that have simplified low-risk burns approvals.

Rosie also assured us that one thing on her agenda is looking at ways to better support Parkcare and others involved with restoration with decision support and monitoring tools.

Peter Cain MLA raised the question of whether the new Office has received more resources. Rosie replied that they hadn't as yet, but that they were reviewing the Nature Conservation Strategy and this may change resource allocations.

The AGM continued with the presentation of the Convenor's and Treasurer's reports, both of which are available on the website, followed by the election of a new Coordinating Committee. The results of the election were as follows:

Convenor: John Brannan

Secretary: Anne Aisbett

Treasurer: Mike Hall

Ordinary Members: Warren Bond, Denise Hall, Alana Wilkes, Len Taylor

Rosie was kind enough to step in as Returning Officer for the committee election process.

Thanks to Warren for setting up and running the Zoom session for any members who wished to attend the AGM virtually, and 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.

John Brannan
Convenor

18 June 2023



Lazy Sunday afternoon on The Pinnacle

Photo: Warren Bond