



fotpin update #16 June 2015

Hi all,

The Autumn period is generally a time when ParkCare activities start to slow down somewhat heading into the quieter time over Winter, but this year I barely had a weekend in April or May when there wasn't some sort of activity at the Pinnacle.

March 29th was the Hawker Primary School Fête, where this year our stall was strategically positioned right next to the plant stall, so both benefited from the mutual shared interests. As usual, there was a good level of interest in fotpin and what we do. Thanks once again to Elizabeth for organizing the exhibits on the stall and to everyone who came along to staff the stall during the day.

Early in April we began the preparations for the April 26th planting event by emptying the water cube set up for the October 2013 planting and removing most of the tree guards from the plants, which are doing very well overall and were all grateful (we like to think) for the drink. The empty tank and used tree guards and stakes were then trailered over to the new planting site, where PCS kindly refilled the tank for us. Again, my thanks to everyone who helped with the watering, guard and stake removal and tank relocation.

The first of the Autumn Walks program was my bird walk on April 19th. The turnout was good for a very pleasant (if slightly breezy) morning's walk, and the birds were good enough to also participate in good numbers. Autumn is a time when we see the return of many of the birds who leave us for the Summer, and there is a brief period when we can see both the local breeding species as well as the species who breed elsewhere and then return for the Winter.

The next key event was the [planting in the Central and Dam paddocks](#). Like the October 2013 planting, this was intended to supplement the trees planted in the 1980s and early 1990s by adding missing groundlayer and shrublayer species. The planting spanned the Valley track on the way down to the dam, with the bulk of the groundlayer species going in under the trees on the eastern side of the track, where there are extensive patches of bare, and hence erosion-prone, ground under the trees. This contrasts with the area west of the track where there is a lush growth of grasses and forbs (mostly exotic, alas) under the trees. Consequently, most of the shrubs ended up on that side of the track. Many thanks to everyone who turned up to help with the planting on the day, to Greening Australia for supplying the seedlings, and to the ACT Government for providing the funding through the Woodlands Restoration Project.

Fotpin's now annual kangaroo count (our fifth!) was held on May 3rd, which was an absolutely perfect day, much to the relief of those who can still remember the soaking they got during last year's rain-drenched event. Once again, Pax cajoled an amazing turnout of volunteers for the morning and afternoon counts. The results from the two counts, while not as close to each other as we have achieved in previous years, were still inside the tolerance accepted by PCS ranger and macropod authority Don Fletcher who, with his usual wit and energy, coached and guided us all through the morning and afternoon counts. The final count (averaged from the two results) was 613, which is down from last year's count of 772 but still more than twice the sustainable number for the Reserve and the adjoining areas. For those of us doing the counting, it was a wonderful excuse to spend the day (or part of it) walking through the Reserve on what was probably the last really warm and sunny day of Autumn. My thanks to everyone who came out to share the day with us and give up their time and energy, and particularly to Pax for mustering the numbers we need to make the exercise successful. Thanks also to Don Fletcher and his colleagues at PCS for their excellent support and advice. See the [details of the count](#) together with some photos on our website.

Our esteemed Treasurer, webmeister and all-round data wizard Warren led his inaugural walk on May 17th, highlighting the transformation that the Reserve has undergone since it was first established, both since the pre-planting days in the 1980s and since the establishment of fotpin. Armed with a portfolio of before-and-after photos and charts, Warren made a very impressive argument for the value of well-considered intervention by volunteer organisations (with the assistance and under the auspices of

government, of course). For those who missed out, I shall be endeavouring to persuade Warren to repeat his excellent outing in the Spring. The content of the walk will also be summarised in our next Newsletter#7, to be available very soon.

My next intervention at the Reserve was less auspicious. Following the start of the Reserve closures for kangaroo management at the beginning of May, someone (and I point no fingers here) decided it would be fun to pull the tree guards off around 30 of the seedlings we had planted in April. More annoyingly, they opened the stopcock on the water tank and wasted around 700 litres of water. Several fotpins noticed the removed guards and alerted me, so I organized a small group to head out and replace the tree guards. Fortunately, the plants themselves had not been touched and all survived OK. This was followed by another visit several days later to give all the plants a much-needed drink from the tank, which PCS had kindly arranged to refill in the interim. My thanks to the gents who came out and helped on both visits and to PCS for refilling the tank yet again.

Finally, last weekend, I attended an event held at a primary school close to the Garran-Hughes woodland, which is just north and east of Woden town centre. The occasion was the official launch of Landcare ACT. This is a new peak body made up of members of all of the local catchment groups and representatives from local ParkCare and Landcare groups. Its function is "to provide strategic support and a unified community voice for the catchment groups and the groups that they support." (Quotes taken from the Landcare ACT press release.) As part of the National Landcare Network, Landcare ACT will be in a position to coordinate and assist the work done by on-the-ground volunteer organisations in our region by providing "a community voice for landcare programs at the national level". It also includes rural landholders and members of the local Aboriginal community. The event was attended by many of the local ParkCare/Landcare group coordinators, as well as local MLAs, Aboriginal representatives and speakers from other state Landcare organisations. Visit the [Landcare ACT](#) webpage for more information. After the speeches and cake (nice!), we all wandered up to the local woodland and planted a few trees, before heading back to the school for a BBQ lunch and a longer chat with old friends.

As we head into Winter, my thoughts are already turning to the Spring and all the work that lies ahead of us. Our amazing efforts combatting weeds in the Reserve over the past 5 years mean that that particular burden is steadily lessening and we can turn more of our attention to the adjacent Bottom Pinnacle and North Kama paddocks. This is becoming increasingly interesting as a large chunk of that area will soon be put in Reserve as an offset area, and fotpin will doubtless have a key role in the rehabilitation of the new area.

However, in the more immediate future is our next AGM, which will be held next month at Weetangera Primary School as usual on Sunday 26th July at 2 pm. So, if you have an inkling that you might want to play a more active role in fotpin, please consider coming along and sitting in on the committee. Hope to see you all there.

John Brannan
Fotpin Coordinator
17 June 2015