



fotpin update #20 March 2017

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Well, after the wettest winter in nearly two decades it seems like Nature tried to redress the balance, with the year starting with a combination of scorching heat and very low rainfall (75% below average, and the driest summer for 15 years), turning the once-green paddocks at the Reserve into expanses of straw-coloured flattened-down grass. This is quite a contrast with last year, when we had torrential rain in January. While this is torment for gardeners like me, it's been good news on the weeding front as many weeds have simply stopped growing and we can all relax a bit. However, there's still been lots going on and plenty of Autumn events to prepare for. *[Editor's note: since John first wrote this we have of course had above average rain in March].*

Weed Control

This topic is comprehensively covered in Warren's [monthly reports on the web](#), but I feel I must acknowledge what his report does not mention, namely the huge weeding effort put in by Warren himself. Not only did he spend hundreds of hours trudging round the paddocks spraying St. John's Wort, Verbascum and Briar Rose, he also mixed all the chemicals we used for weed control, and coordinated and logged everyone's effort on the website. And while I'm at it, kudos also to all the other weeders who have continued to head out in the heat and target the weeds in the reserve. An excellent effort all round. *[Editor's note: A special mention to our Convenor who led from the front and tripled his weed control effort this season to help compensate for the loss of Pax's input].*

ParkCare Coordinators' Meeting

The first of the year's PCS ParkCare Coordinators' meetings was held on February 28th at the Stromlo depot, as usual. The key points are as follows:

- The meeting was chaired by our new "Community Programs Coordinator", Alison McLeod, who takes over what was the ParkCare/Landcare Coordinator position from Phil Selmes. Phil himself is now our new ParkCare Ranger, taking over from Craig Wainwright, who left to take up a position out at Tidbinbilla.
- Signage upgrade -- Lois Padgham (who we have been liaising with on signage for The Pinnacle) was supposed to present this section, but was ill, so Alison filled in, with help from Scott Seymour, who is the PCS Manager for Southside and has been working with Lois on this initiative. Alison made it clear that PCS sees the new signs as primarily for "Orientation" (what people need to know) as opposed to "Interpretation" (what people want to know). This suggests that they see little scope for adding interpretive information (historical or otherwise) to the signs. I did point out that there was room on the back of the sign for contact information for the local ParkCare/Landcare group, and that seemed to be received positively. Clearly, this is still an ongoing conversation within PCS.
- Prescribed burns -- Phil listed the reserves where prescribed burns are planned for the coming year, and The Pinnacle came up twice. One is the anticipated hazard reduction burn in the Weetangera and Eastern paddocks, and the other is an ecological patch burn proposed for the northern quadrant of the Pinnacle Extension. We have since heard from Nin Bruns (Senior Ranger, Offsets) that the burn in the Extension is unlikely to take place at this stage.

The burns are contained in this season's [Bushfire Operations Plan](#) (BOP).

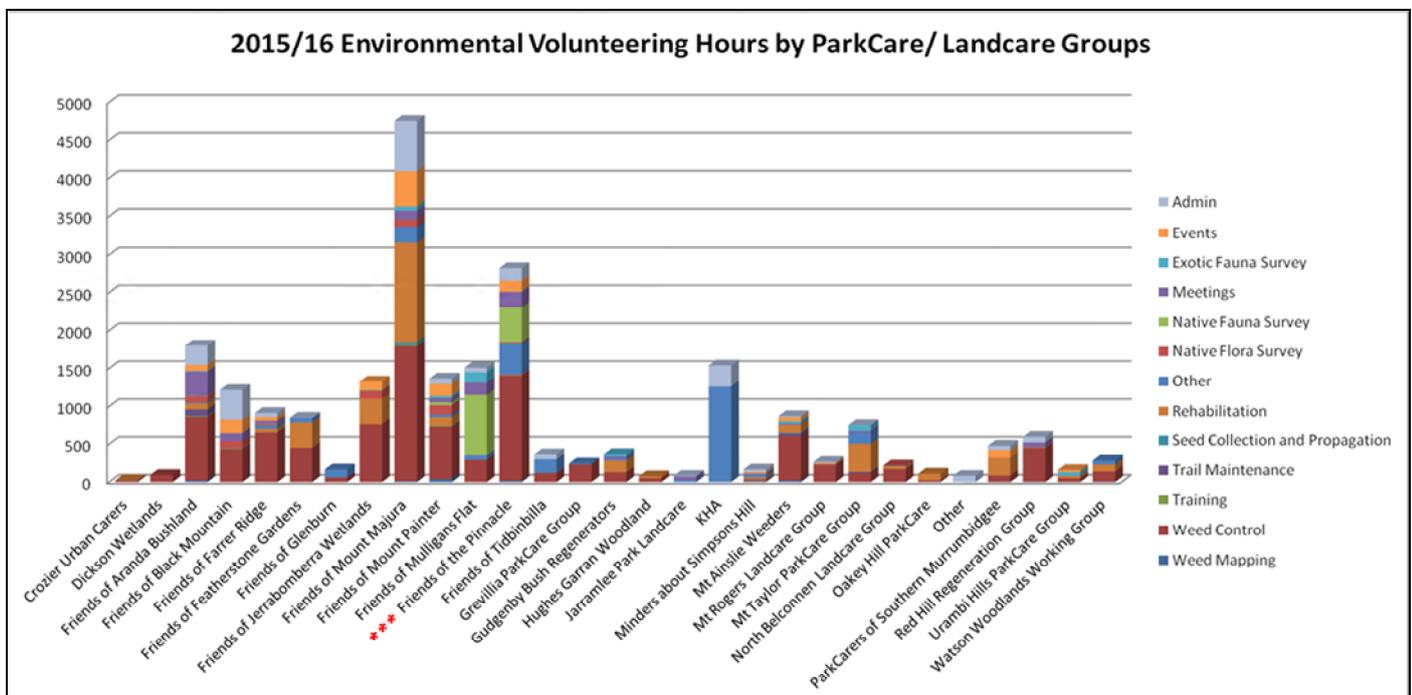
The relevant map for the Pinnacle is map 6 (BOP-2016-17-Map-6). The proposed burns are shown on the map in red and marked as FB370 (Weetangera & Eastern) and FB748 (Extension). Details of the burns are provided on pages 8 and 10 of the plan

respectively. From the same web page, you can also download a separate document that explains what the "Ecological Guidelines" are.

Map 6 also shows the other control measures that are being used at the Reserve [slashing and "Vegetation Management" (pruning)], and more details of the other activities indicated by codes on the map (FS020, FS021, etc.) are given in the BOP document.

Bear in mind that the timing of actual burns tends to be somewhat opportunistic in response to the weather, moisture levels and other environmental considerations. Consequently, the FMU can generally only give one or two days' notice. We will pass along any information we have as soon as we get it.

- Kangaroo management plan -- The window for this year's roo control measures is March 1 to July 31, but the reserve closures will be much shorter than this and are yet to be announced. It also isn't clear yet which reserves will be targeted for culls this time around.
- ParkCare 25th Anniversary benches -- These are now available, and we will soon be circulating the membership with some suggested locations so we can have a poll.
- ParkCare effort statistics -- Alison put up the following chart of the latest figures for volunteer effort on all the urban and peri-urban reserves around Canberra. More details (and higher resolution images) may be found in the [full report](#).



Belconnen Hills Vegetation Plan

I was approached a few months ago by Sarah Hnatiuk, the convenor of the Friends of Mount Painter (FOMP), who wanted to sound us out about the idea of formulating an overall vegetation strategy for all the Belconnen Hills reserves (Aranda Bushland, Mt Painter, The Pinnacle and, potentially, Kama Nature Reserve). These discussions are only in their early stages at this point, but Sarah and I feel that there would be considerable value in formulating such a strategy to guide future revegetation activities in the reserves concerned. We will keep the membership informed of developments.

Pinnacle Extension

On Tuesday March 7th Warren Bond, John FitzGerald and I met with Nina Bruns, the PCS Senior (Offsets) Ranger managing the Pinnacle Extension. This is the third time that we've met with Nina in the last 9 months in what we expect to be a series of ongoing meetings to exchange information and discuss plans and progress.

Highlights of the recent meeting include:

- the status of the Offset Management Plan, which is now publicly available and can be accessed through the [Pinnacle Extension](#) web page;
- the gate at the north-east corner will soon be replaced with a step-through gate for easier access (in the meantime the gate is now unlocked while there are no stock present);
- signage is being held up awaiting the finalisation of the new PCS style guidelines;
- we discussed the route for a walking track through the Extension and the possibility of a seat somewhere at the south-eastern extremity of the track;
- it was deemed necessary, under the Bushfire Operations Plan, to graze the northern section of the Extension again this year (as permitted by the Draft Management Plan);
- works are being carried out to monitor and prevent the enlargement of the erosion gully in the northern section, to protect regenerating trees and shrubs and to protect the dam from the cattle
- control of major weeds was carried out by contractors in Spring and further work will be carried out in Autumn; in late summer fotpin carried out weed control for some of the other weeds we have normally controlled there.

Upcoming Events

- Hawker Primary School Fete -- Sunday April 2nd
Once again, we will have a display stall at the school fete and will be calling for volunteers to help staff the stall for a couple of hours during the day. Please think about setting aside some time for this, either to help out on the stall or just to check out what is always a fun and interesting event.
- Clean-up Day
We were unable to coordinate our clean-up efforts at the Pinnacle with this year's Clean Up Australia day as we have for the last two years, but rest assured that we will be having a clean-up day once the weather cools down a little more and we're less busy with other activities. This may be accompanied by a BBQ if circumstances permit.
- Autumn Walks Program
This is still being finalized, but seems likely at this point to consist solely of the usual bird walk. We discussed the possibility of another walk through the Pinnacle Extension, but decided that this is probably best left until next spring. This will give people who missed out on last year's spring walk a chance to have a look around the new area with some people who can explain the background as well as the wonderful plants and birds that are found down there.

John Brannan
Fotpin Convenor
22 March 2016