



friends of the pinnacle

an introduction



Dr Don Driscoll

Exotic grasses and other weeds have wrought the most profound environmental change throughout the The Pinnacle Nature Reserve and similar degraded grassy box-gum woodlands in SE Australia. Such weeds cover the majority of the area, they exclude most native plants, and are a threat to woodland fauna. Traditional weeding methods cannot defeat this weed menace and new techniques are demanded. Recent research suggests that removing nutrients from the soil may tip the balance back in favour of native species. We must therefore discover first if nutrient management does favour native species in our area, and second how we can reduce nutrients over large areas in a cost-effective manner.

In ten sites, we have fenced and unfenced plots, each with four treatments for reducing soil nutrients (sugar, slash removal, burning, sterile crop harvest) and a control. Sugar can lock up soil nutrients, to the advantage of native plants, but is expensive. The other treatments have the potential to be applied at reasonable cost over large areas. Our project will identify methods that are critical for woodland restoration. We will discover how nutrient management influences the cover of exotic and native species, how to reduce nutrient levels at a large scale, and how our restoration activities may be influenced by herbivores.



Warren Bond, Treasurer

Weed Management

A Draft Community Weed Management Plan was compiled for The Pinnacle Nature Reserve in early 2010. It was based on a systematic survey (Spring 2009) of the weed species present and their prevalence, and on the best available information from other volunteer groups and government departments. Prioritisation was informed by the relative invasiveness of each weed, as well as potential for effective control. The plan included an estimate of the amount of effort (hours) required to ensure that there would be no increase in the seed bank of the priority weed species. Our volunteer weeders exchange information with each other via

our website by logging weeding effort and weed observations. These are compiled and displayed on the website along with geospatial information as a "recent weeding" log, "weed notes", and as summaries of effort expended categorised by weed type and management area. These also form the basis of our performance monitoring, although further work is needed in this area.

The 2010-2011 season was an overwhelming one for weed control and highlighted issues such as selecting and prioritising control activities and mobilising weeders at critical times. To help address these we have organised a forum involving our own and other ParkCare groups' members in late March.



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Heather Burness, Secretary

The Pinnacle Nature Reserve (PNR) is part of the Belconnen Hills and is a corridor between Mt Painter, Black Mountain, the Lower Molonglo River corridor and the Murrumbidgee River. From the reserve I can see the physical connection in the middle distance and retrace it to where I stand and dwell within the landscape.

Within that landscape the ACT government is proposing to develop some 55,000 new residences with associated infrastructure over the next 15 years on the doorstep of vulnerable Box Gum Woodland and Natural Temperate grassland. If as a community, we look at the 'wrong horizon' in Australia and are seduced by the 'vista' and the Romantic tradition of the sublime 'scene', we fail to see

the middle distance and what is at our feet; what we are within. Fotpin's goal is to build a community of interest in the PNR. One way we are doing this is by approaching the ACT government to include The Bottom Pinnacle and North Kama (adjacent land parcels to the reserve) within what would potentially become a substantial nature conservation corridor across the northern slopes of the Lower Molonglo Valley. The challenge is to engage our communities in nature conservation and to encourage active participation in the corridor's preservation and wellbeing; encouraging connection to 'place'. *Heather Burness is a visual artist with an environmentally based practice and is currently lecturing at the ANU School of Art.*



Vaughn Cox, Convenor

The Pinnacle Nature Reserve is a component of the Canberra Nature Park, which includes Black Mountain and Mount Ainslie. Located in the Lower Molonglo Valley, this 126ha Reserve contains box gum woodland, derived grassland and E. Macrorhyncha forest communities. Portions of the Reserve were subject to plantation style plantings in the 1990s, whilst large areas are dominated by exotic groundcover species. The Reserve was part of a rural lease until the mid 1980s. The Friends of the Pinnacle (fotpin) formed officially in July 2010 from a group of over 20 enthusiasts. Fotpin now has a membership of 45, an active Committee and, we believe, an innovative and informative website (www.fotpin.org). Web development

has targeted monitoring, evaluating and reporting on the implementation of our draft Community Weed Management Plan. Our group's goal is to build an enduring community of interest to protect and restore the reserve. Through our program of guided walks, and by connecting with local educational institutions, we're reaching out to our community to create a shared sense of place and connection. Our initial focus "on ground" has been controlling invasive weeds and rabbits, however we will also be addressing total grazing pressure, erosion, the impacts of inappropriate fire regimes and priorities for active restoration. Fotpin operates within guidelines set by the ACT Government's Parks and Conservation Service.