



fotpin update #51 September 2025

In this update:

Pinnacle events

ParkCare annual planning briefing

Native species biodiversity

Environmental volunteers conference

Watermain corridor revegetation

Improving The Pinnacle dam

Weed control

Winter this year has been one that demonstrates that global warming doesn't necessarily mean that things just get warmer. Scientists have been telling us for decades that climate change means more extreme weather, and the freezing mornings we've had this winter certainly felt extreme to me. Now, however, things are warming up and the reserve is gradually coming alive. New shoots are appearing everywhere, and the birds are busy either courting or nest building already. I for one am particularly eager to see what springs up in the Forest following the hazard reduction burn in April. The signs are already good, with lots of grasses and native wildflowers sending up new growth, and many of the trees also showing good signs of recovery. Of course, it will be several years before the Forest fully recovers, but if the area south of the Macrorhyncha track (which was burnt in the early noughties) is any guide, the Forest may well be a much more floristically diverse patch in the years to come.

Pinnacle Events

Our program of events for the coming spring is taking shape rapidly. This Spring's program includes two bird walks guided by myself, a walk to examine the post-burn recovery of the Red Stringybark woodland in the Forest block, led by John Fitz Gerald, a Walk for Families to be led by Nola McKeon, the annual Joint ParkCare Display at the Jamison Centre in Macquarie, and Pinnacle display/information stalls at the Halloween-themed Spring Fete at Hawker Primary school and at the Florey Fair.

The current dates are as follows:

- Bird Walk 1: Sunday, September 14 (NB already booked out)
- Post-burn Forest Walk: TBA
- fotpin stall at Hawker Primary School Fete: Sunday, October 26
- Family walk: TBA
- Bird Walk 2: Sunday, November 2
- fotpin stall at Florey Fair: Saturday, November 15

More information about these events will be added to our [What's On](#) calendar on the website as it becomes available. In the meantime, feel free to contact me anytime if you'd like to sign up for any of the events. Just email me at convenor@fotpin.org.au or call me on 0405 331 405.

Molonglo Watermain Pipeline Corridor Revegetation

Given the BOM's prediction of a wet spring and summer, this spring is looking good for our planned seeding in the three fenced plots along the pipeline, using the bags of native grass seed we received from PCS (Parks and Conservation Service) last year. We may supplement the grasses with some native wildflower seed to boost the diversity in the plots.

I'm pleased to report that the shrub and tree seedlings we planted in the upper end of the Icon water tanks compound have been doing very well, with a roughly 90%+ survival rate. This is largely thanks to some determined follow-up watering and re-planting by Mitchell and Cybele (thanks again guys!), with a little bit of help from me.

My current feeling is that now we have probably done as much as we can reasonably do to rehabilitate the Icon water tanks compound. If the trees and shrubs we planted in December continue to thrive, they will in time modify the soils in the area so that we can come back in perhaps 10 years or so and attempt to establish some native ground cover under the

developing trees. In the meantime, we will continue monitoring the progress of the existing plantings and consider other ways to promote rehabilitation in the area.

ParkCare Annual Planning Briefing

This was held online on August 5th and included briefings from the Invasive Plants Team (Harley Baker), Invasive Animals Team (Sally McIntosh), Fire Management Unit Planning Team (Fire Ecologist Bethany Dunne), National Parks Team (Nadia Kuzman, Tidbinbilla Area Manager), Urban Parks & Reserves Team (Shelley Swain, standing in for Wade Young) and the Office of Nature Conservation (Renee Brawata). Myself and Warren attended the briefing.

The minutes and the Invasive Weeds powerpoint presentation (in pdf format) are now available on the [Annual ParkCare Briefings](#) page of our website. The minutes include a summary of the content of each presentation, as well as responses from the Questions and Answers session, including any items that were taken on notice.

There will also be a separate Annual Planning Meeting with the district rangers for each ParkCare group later this month to discuss our specific plans for works in the reserve for the remainder of the 2025-26 year. Ours is currently scheduled for September 29th.

Improving The Pinnacle Dam

A few months ago I had a conversation with Anke Maria Hoefer, Coordinator of the Waterwatch and Frogwatch programs, and currently acting Catchment Coordinator for Ginninderra Catchment Group. She spoke about ideas she had for habitat improvements for our dam. These included adding more woody debris, planting vegetation in temporary gabions to increase the floristic diversity around the dam edges, and possibly installing a raised board walk out into the dam to minimise damage and erosion around the dam edges.

I would like to see at least some of this happen, and I will be meeting with Anke Maria and other experts in waterway restoration in the very near future to discuss our dam refurbishment in detail. My hope is that we can develop a plan that we can take to our PCS rangers and perhaps obtain grant funding either later this year or early next year.

If you have any views on these proposals or would like to be involved please let me know.



Recent view of the Pinnacle dam

Photo: John Brannan

Pinnacle Native Species Biodiversity (Warren Bond)

The total number of native species identified on the reserve continues to increase gradually and currently stands at 1085: 491 insects, 277 plants, 120 birds, 65 fungi, 51 spiders, 29 mosses, lichens and liverworts, 27 reptiles and amphibians and 25 others. For a full breakdown see the [Flora & Fauna](#) page on our website where you can access lists of all the species and download the latest tally of species sorted by groups.

A large part of the increase in numbers over the winter months was in the groups of fungi, mosses and lichens. Species in these groups are quite hard to identify from photographs alone and from a distance often tend to all look much the same (mosses in particular) so they receive less attention than many other species. Under a macro lens, however, mosses and lichens exhibit a world of difference and beauty. I've included a collection of recent moss photos below, not all positively identified yet.



Mosses on The Pinnacle Nature Reserve

Photos: Warren Bond

Weed Control (Warren Bond)

It's been a reasonably quiet winter on the weed front with little post-summer rainfall until July. Those weeds that thrive in drier conditions, such as Paterson's curse and Saffron thistles, have had a competitive advantage particularly in areas with little other ground cover. Both are particularly widespread in Kama Link, where we're grateful that our ranger has been able to put in some time spraying Paterson's curse.

A wrap of the [weeding effort for the 2024-2025](#) season can be found on our website.

In the last couple of months we have welcomed our inaugural Convenor Pax back to the spraying team after a long break, considerably boosting our weed control capacity. We consider spraying to be by far the most efficient and effective means of weed control. It avoids soil disturbance (which creates ideal conditions for more weed growth); broadleaf weeds remain intact for some time after they die, thereby subduing further germination; and large areas can be treated in much less time than by physical means such as grubbing and pulling. A comparison of areas of similar size and intensity of infestation showed that intensive spraying took less than a third of the time compared with physical removal. Using the right equipment and appropriate selective herbicides there is also less off-target impact from spraying compared with physical removal.

We still need to boost our spraying team to ensure ongoing control of the most invasive weeds across the reserve. If you are interested in being involved please contact me (webmaster@fotpin.org.au) to find out more about what is involved. PCS provides the necessary training if you decide to join us (after an introductory session or two) as well as the equipment and chemicals that we use.

Environmental Volunteers Conference 2025

Following the resounding success of the ParkCare 30th anniversary conference in 2019, it was decided that in future, an environmental volunteers conference would be held every two years. Due to COVID, the first of these didn't happen until 2023, and the 2025 conference took place over two days, Friday August 8th and Saturday 9th, with "Regeneration" as the overarching theme for the event.

Friday was taken up with field trips to reserves all over Canberra, with participants having a choice of 4 different options in the morning and afternoon. In the morning, I opted to attend an indigenous interpretation walk at Mulligans Flat, presented by Ngunawal and Gamilaraay man, Richie Allen. Richie offered a fascinating take on the indigenous use of the land and the relationships that aborigines developed with the wildlife. Particularly interesting were the "ring trees" he pointed out along the way – trees that had been carefully shaped by the Ngunawal people so that their branches formed circles that were used as cultural markers and navigational aids for aboriginal people walking through the landscape.

The afternoon trip I chose was a delightful presentation by Rainer Rehwinkel in the recently protected area of Bluett's Block. As it happened, the Fire Management Unit chose to conduct a hazard reduction burn on the day of the walk, so Rainer took us to a block of very similar box-gum grassy woodland just across the road. It was especially valuable to be able to walk through such a nice example of a critically endangered ecosystem with someone with Rainer's level of knowledge and expertise.



Ring tree at Mulligans Flat

Photo: John Brannan

Saturday's program of presentations unfolded at the Ann Harding Conference Centre in the University of Canberra, which is an excellent venue for events of this size (around 150 people attended the Saturday program). Speakers included MLA Suzanne Orr, the ACT Minister for Climate Change, Environment, Energy and Water, Bren Burkevics, the ACT Conservator of Flora and Fauna, with the Keynote address given by Pip Kiernan, the Chair of Clean Up Australia. After the formalities, the conference broke up into morning and afternoon panel sessions, with four sessions running concurrently so that participants could choose their preferred panel. The breakout sessions covered topics such as volunteer recruitment and retention, climate resilience, soil conservation, storytelling in Landcare, landscape rehydration, citizen science, and cultivating nature connection for personal health. The conference wrapped up with a closing address from Michael Robinson, CEO of Landcare ACT, which co-hosted the event jointly with the ACT Government.

Like all such events, the value comes as much from the connections and exchanges with other volunteers as it does from the formal program, and I came away with lots of inspiration and new ideas for our work at The Pinnacle.

John Brannan
Convenor
September 2025