

DEPARTMENT OF CONSERVATION AND LAND MANAGEMENT

POLICY DIRECTORATE

Administrative Instruction No. 27

Ref: 008211F2206

LANDSCOPE EDITORIAL POLICY

Although Landscape supersedes Forest Focus and SWANS, it does not follow that its purpose and intended audience, and thus editorial policy, is the same. The Department of Conservation and Land Management has new and additional responsibilities which must be taken into account, particularly a commitment to public participation in management decisions. On top of all other aims we might have for Landscape, it must appeal to many thousands of paying subscribers.

Objective

The objective of Landscape is to inspire a wider group of Western Australians to not only understand research, policy and management developments in conservation of flora and fauna and management of the natural estate, but to adopt a 'conservation ethic' - one which recognises a balance of the long term needs of the community and the integrity of the State's ecosystems.

The content must be technically correct and at the 'extreme centre' (sic) of the issues involved. It is recognised that neutrality is very much in the eye of the beholder, and that an article's stance must not violate departmental or Government policy. Often we will include the different sides to an issue.

The content must be current and relevant. Management planning and policy issues must be canvassed while they are still an issue. Landscape must be looked upon as part of the communication process in current awareness and public involvement, and not an academic treatment after the event. In the Editor's pursuit of material to suit these criteria authors must understand there can be difficulties in finalising a draft because the need to communicate via Landscape may precede relevant policy decisions.

The content must be easy to read and have something interesting to say. The Department wishes to increase public understanding in an era of information explosion. We are competing for the public's limited reading time, when electronic

media dominate. Landscape needs 12,000 paying customers in the short term, and 20,000 in the long term, to remain viable.

The Editor must make sure that the articles are bright and attention grabbing (without compromising technical accuracy, neutrality and policy positions), and that the text fits with the pictorial or visual component. Authors will often be surprised by the Editor's first effort at improving the text, but a mutually agreed style can be quickly reached if they are prepared to compromise.

Landscape is a "window" to the responsibilities and activities of the Department, and goes under the banner of "WA's Conservation, Forests and Wildlife Magazine". There is subtle emphasis on the credibility of the magazine, identity of the author, and authenticity of the content. A "psychological distance" from the Government's or Department's "party line" is maintained. Subscribers aren't going to continue to pay for Landscape for what they perceive to be departmental propaganda.

The content is solely Western Australian. We believe that Landscape has a niche in a very competitive market to the extent it has local content, and coincides with parochial interests.

#### Audience

The readership has to be a wider group than received Forest Focus or SWANS, but will not be the general public. To put it bluntly we are not chasing the 'great unwashed'; that indefinable general public. Nor are we merely appealing to the 'old faithful'; those groups and people who have traditionally supported wildlife and conservation endeavours. In fact, many will qualify for free copies in recognition of voluntary assistance.

It is difficult to precisely predict Landscape's audience, but we are assuming it is made up of the following elements:

- people with special interests in the enjoyment, appreciation and study of the environment - the sort of people who join wildflower societies, the Naturalists Club, etc.
- people (many are older) who are interested in outdoor recreation (camping, bushwalking, canoeing, caving, etc), visiting national parks, and touring the natural sites of the State.
- special interest groups and their members who are vitally concerned about the Department's policies and management - many will be our critics.
- scientists, researchers and environmental specialists.

"friends of CALM" - family and friends of departmental staff.

### Style

Australian Geographic sets an appropriate standard for Landscape to follow. On more mundane matters of scientific terms and other conventions, the Australian Government Publishing Manual is used.

The bone of contention is how to improve readability and appeal to paying customers without compromising technical accuracy and integrity.

The article must start boldly with an appeal to the reader. There must be some variety in presentation - photographs, figures, maps, boxed sub-stories, etc. There are times when a deductive, inductive or chronological sequence will be varied to achieve these results, or some points in the article will be 'lifted' for greater emphasis.

We cannot afford articles written in the usual scientifically cautious tone (rejecting a null hypothesis). They must be positive in observation and conclusion.

It is very informative to read Australian Geographic magazine and note the style of the writing.

Remember, it is the result that is important. Landscape and the Department need thousands of paying subscribers being made more aware and understanding of the activities and issues concerning management and protection of the natural estate.

We look at an article from the consumers', not the information provider's, perspective.

### Editorial

Executive Editor: Sweton Stewart  
Editor: Liana Christensen

The editors' job is to achieve the objectives stated above and to steer Landscape as a commercially viable venture. They must have the accepted degree of authority to achieve these.

It is well to remember that differences of opinions with authors, and resultant negotiations and compromises are an occupational hazard in the editors' job. They are mentally prepared for such temporary difficulties; many authors often aren't. The editors are given considerable power to persuade authors to change.

There are very few initial drafts which do not undergo considerable change in the editing process and there are very few authors who wouldn't agree that the end result is better off for it.

If there is a dispute between author and editor, then the Executive Editor is asked to assist. If settlement is not possible then the Manager, Information Branch is asked to adjudicate. In serious disputes the 'leader' in the author's area (eg branch manager) is also called in.

The principle which operates here is that the 'pecking order' of the Department should only be called in as a dispute settling procedure, and should not influence the editor-author relationship. All authors are treated equally, whether in research, operations or policy.

The following checking sequence will apply to contributed and commissioned articles.

1. The final draft must be seen by the author(s), and signed to that effect, before a final policy check and then typesetting.
2. All drafts will be submitted to the Manager Information Branch for checking for matters such as policy implications, failure to consider other departmental aspects, and obvious faux pas.
3. All drafts will be passed to the Executive Director and General Manager for a final policy check.
4. Any changes requested by the Executive Director, General Manager, or Manager, Information Branch will be brought to the author's attention by the editors.
- \* After typesetting the Executive Editor takes full responsibility for accuracy.
5. Copies of the corrected galleys (typesetting) will be sent to authors, the Executive Director and General Manager for their information. They have 48 hours to respond on any other errors detected. Changes to text, etc, (for style) will normally not be allowed, and only with approval of the Manager, Information Branch.
6. Authors will be asked to check photographs and captions together once the photograph selection is complete. This will usually be at short notice, requiring a visit to Publications Section.
7. All scientific names will be checked with nominated officers of Research Division.
8. Where deletion of 'over matter' and other layout changes are required by production constraints the Executive Editor must check back with the author where change in meaning is likely.

Planning

A Landscape Planning Committee has been appointed to discuss and decide on the composition of future Landscape editions and the 'thrust' many articles should take, before commissioning an author.

Members are:

- Roger Underwood, General Manager
- Barry Wilson, Director Nature Conservation
- Frank McKinnell, Divisional Manager Services
- Peter Kimber, Chief Liaison Officer
- Wayne Schmidt, Manager Recreation and Landscape Branch
- Sweton Stewart, Senior Publications Officer
- Liana Christensen, Publications Officer
- Cliff Winfield, Displays Officer
- Kevin Goss, Manager Information Branch (Chair)

The committee meets every three months, and more often if required. It has a planning role rather than an editorial one. It plans two and three editions ahead.

Timing

Landscape is issued quarterly as follows:

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|----------------|------------|
| Summer edition | 1 November |
| Autumn edition | 1 February |
| Winter edition | 1 May      |
| Spring edition | 1 August   |

Normally an author is given six weeks to prepare an article. A period of 4 1/2 months is allowed from submission of a draft to publication.

Syd Shea  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

13 February 1987

Distribution: Lists A,B,C,D,E,F

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