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DEPARTMENT OF PARKS AND WILDLIFE

ANOTHER VIEW

Prescribed burning and conservation

A letter from Mr. Clarke of the Native Orchid Study and Conservation Groups appeared in the papers recently saying "The Forests Department, with its history of spring burns and little research into the effects of these burns, has shown scant concern for conservation."

Mr Clarke is interested in native orchids and conservation, interests he shares with many of us. However, he implies that "spring burns" are, in some way, not compatible with that interest.

Let's think for a moment about spring burns and orchids, and trees and people.

Fire has been in Western Australia and the plants have learned to live with it over millions of years.

Prior to 1954 this Department attempted a no burning policy. Only strategic fire breaks were burned. In 1954 the policy was changed to one of prescribed burning. The policy had not been fully implemented when, in 1961, 19 lightning strikes produced 19 uncontrollable fires in the Dwellingup area. The town of Dwellingup and the settlements of Nanga, Chadoora and Holyoake were reduced to ashes, and the fires ravaged 140 000 ha. In the same year, other fires occurred in the State, and the Government set up a Royal Commission to "Enquire and report upon the Bush fires..."

One of the Commissioner's recommendations was "that the Forests Department make every endeavour to improve and extend the practice of control burning to ensure that the forests receive the maximum protection practicable, consistent with silvicultural requirements."

Control burning is now a standard practice and, with continual research, has been brought to a very high standard.

The ultimate test for prescribed burning occurred during Cyclone Alby in April 1978.

Ninety two fires were reported in State Forest.

No settlements were burned, no towns were destroyed, and all the fires were soon controlled. The prescribed burning policy, so well carried out for twenty years, paid off.

All right, so we burn the bush for a good reason, but what about the effects of burning on the wild flowers and understorey of the forest?


This has also been the subject of a number of studies.

Most recently, two independent botanists from the W.A. University found that after fuel reducing burns:

- * herbaceous plants are the first to regenerate;
- * regeneration comes mainly from root stocks;
- * the majority of plants in the forest regenerate from root stock and so, once established, they will continue;
- * fire apparently has little effect in determining the composition of species in any particular area of the forest;
- * species diversity drops off after an early peak (3-5 years), due to the death of many short lived species.
- * a five year burning cycle in the forest seems appropriate to maintain richness and diversity. (Many seeds need fire to aid germination.)

Clearly, fire has been (and will continue to be) a major factor shaping our forest environment. Though at first unsightly, prescribed burning makes it safer for people and property, and burning every five years maintains a good show and variety of wild flowers.

A. H.



Letters to the Editor

Dear Editor,

Your January 11th Bush Telegraph brought good news "At last, greenies are gaining respectability".

Sadly, this respectability hasn't reached this corner of the world yet. Down here "greenies" is still a very dirty word.

Since my husband began work with the Forests Department he has come to see some of the more beautiful parts of the forest and on weekends has taken family and friends along to share the beauty of them.

On every one of these jaunts we must pass through one or more areas of clear felling, sometimes stretching as far as the eye can see. Why must such huge areas be clear felled instead of smaller coops, leaving more areas of older forest in between?

How long will clear felling be practiced in our precious forests and where can I get more information on policy and effect of same?

Yours sincerely

J F Smith
(Northcliffe)

Editor - the following extracts are taken from the summary of the Department's General Working Plan (1982-87).

Overall Management Objective

The management objective for land under control of the Forests Department is conservation through the planned use of forests and associated resources, for the greatest long-term social and economic benefits.

Conservation, as interpreted in this objective, has been defined by the International Union for Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources as "the management of human use of the biosphere so that it may yield the greatest sustainable benefit to present generations while maintaining its potential to meet the needs and aspirations of future generations.

Thus conservation is positive, embracing preservation, maintenance, sustainable utilization, restoration and enhancement of the natural environment."

Landscape Management Objective

To ensure that, as far as possible, all land uses and activities are planned and carried out in ways that complement, rather than detract from, the inherent visual qualities of the forest environment.

Copies of the full General Working Plan are available from State Headquarters Como (\$12). Phone Jenny Burgess, Como, ext. 246.

Free subscription to the Department's publication Forest Focus is available to the public (not staff) on request. Phone Robyn at Como, Ph. 3676333 extension 325.

Replies in Brief:

Dear Jack: We must have your full name and address with all contributions - only publication is optional.

Thanks to Paul Marsh and John Carter for (written) ideas and encouragement.

Are you receiving enough copies of 'Bush Telegraph' for everybody at your Branch? If not, ring Robyn at Publications Como, ext. 325.

A reply to P.V.H. Vol. 1 No. 3.

Forest management in Western Australia is only in its infancy, when you compare it with similar practice in Europe or the natural forces which have shaped the environment.

However, in an overall programme of research and development (which includes the small patches of pines and eastern state eucalypts) policy is evolving - incorporated, today, in the Department's General Working Plan.

Clearly, today's practices are moving towards better landscape management, with the classification of 'natural' and production areas. An understanding of what constitutes 'natural character' is readily obtained by analysing ecological data such as that provided by Havel. The forest can be zoned in terms of character types, each with their identifiable vegetative and topographic components.

If we must plant exotic vegetation in 'natural' areas, an assessment should be made as to the purpose of such planting and if the particular species blends or is compatible with the existing character type. Does the species have a similar form, colour, texture as the indigenous species with which it will blend or replace? Could a species indigenous to the site do the same job?

Not only have we planted exotic species without regard for how they will fit with the existing character type, but we have also planted them in rows or grid patterns which do not match the existing natural vegetation patterns and therefore emphasize their exotic presence.

E.H.

INVITATION

QEMCOG is an adventure group, based at the QE II Medical Centre but open to all interested in bushwalking, canoeing, cave exploring, cycling etc.

It conducts one day jaunts and weekend excursions of a leisurely and also exploratory nature.

QEMCOG is keen to catalogue and compile excursions for publication. To date, most of the knowledge on interesting and scenic trips has been undocumented and rests in the memories of outdoor aficionados.

We welcome information from the public and seek enthusiasts of all interests, amateur or professional-naturalists, photographers, artists, geographers and people with skills from publishing to first aid.

Most of all we want people who can cook good camp tucker, sing bush ballads and sometimes be a pack mule. We have about 3 weekend activities per month. For March we have a backpacking weekend, a caveing trip and an abseiling course (cliff descents by ropes), all suitable for beginners.

For April we have two single day bushwalks, a day cycle trip, a caveing trip and PARACHUTING lessons for beginners. In May the piece de resistance is HOT AIR BALLOONING in the Avon Valley.

Past trips have included hiking, horseriding through bush, birdwatching, cycling and rafting with inner tubes.

Interested! You have an excellent chance to meet the group by coming to a yacht cruise on Feb 26. Come in your nautical best - as a sailor, pirate, mermaid or in the tatters of a shipwreckee. Ring Pauline Elliott on 381 5948 or Deanne Ketting 386 6431.

Joseph Coletti
QEMCOG Co-ordinator.

TYPE CAST

TEN COMMANDMENTS FOR EVERY TYPIST

1. A typist must remember at all times that she is absolutely stupid.
2. A typist must remember that she must obey no matter what happens.
3. A typist must be able to read shorthand, longhand, script, scrawl, reports and letters written under water, in bed, in the bath, in the train or plane, and also writing done under a microscope. She must be able to unravel her master's voice from a series of extraneous noises on a dictaphone and distinguish a hiccup from a comma.
4. A typist must realise that although her boss has never typed, he can do the job in half the time and twice as accurately.
5. A typist must understand that "typist" is just another word for doormat, tea-pourer, postmistress, mechanic, general buyer, organizer, conveyor, walking encyclopaedia, listening post, servant and babysitter.
6. A typist must have available at all times:- crystal ball, aspirins, nail file, cork screw, tact and charm, endless sympathy and limitless patience.
7. A typist must remember in times of flap and stress that she has never worked so hard as a man.
8. A typist must remember to be pleasant from Monday morning until Friday evening.
9. A typist must be neat and tidy and if possible glamorous at all times, but never, never comb her hair, make-up or clean her nails in office hours.
10. A typist must remember that men are:- His Majesty, Mohammed, Prime Minister, Chief Whip, Genius, Lord and Master, Handsome, Irresistible and not "That so-and-so". They all look like Paul Newman, have the love life of Don Juan and are as funny as Bob Hope, and of course must be worshipped, respected, idolized, to be wrapped in cotton wool, defended against all comers and loved, no matter who they are or what they look like.

Which shows there is more to TYPING than meets the eye!

The Kalgoorlie Division Typist

Social Club

Active and organized, the Social Club (Como) is keen to attract new members. The Club cheerfully plans a variety of activities throughout the year, for members and non members (out-of-towners), and will publicize them in Bush Telegraph.

If you like people and want to join, phone Deborah Greaves on Como extension 263.

★ ★ ★

The Como Social Club has organized a "Harem-Scarem" night at the Perth restaurant, Thousand and One Nights, on Friday, 9 March from 7.30 p.m.

Nine courses of real Lebanese Cuisine and all wine, beer and soft drinks included, for \$25 (double) - (non-members \$40). There will also be belly dancers and a surprise for the best dressed "sheik and shriek."

The Thousand and One Nights Restaurant is at 197 William Street, so park your Rolls and oil wells at the back.

Money and numbers to Deborah Greaves (Como ext. 263) by 23 February.

ON THE JOB AT COLLIE



Meet Dennis Turner (far right) and his team at Collie. Phil Meyer (cab), Steve Rado, Ray Walton, Selv Mileto (kneeling), Peter Dixon, Terry Fimmell, and Maurie Bussell work with Dennis to fabricate all the Forests Department's Fire tenders.

The trade and light engineering work involves the modification of incoming trucks and chassis, to better adapt them for forest work in general, and fire protection in particular.

Permanent modifications include the provision of steps and storage. The fire fighting adaptations are usually fabricated as "slip-ons" for the fire season.

Last year the crew put together 20 fire units, including slip-ons for Heavy duty vehicles and gang trucks (pictured), and smaller interchangeable units for utes and trailers.

In the construction of the Heavy duty slip-ons they utilize a Holden Motor (161 HP), a 3000 litre water tank, aluminium tool boxes, hose reels, and a 2" stalker pump. Design work is done by the Protection Branch. Total cost for the H.D. fire unit (less truck) - \$8000.

The team also carry out pump maintenance (top priority), fiberglass repairs and spray painting.

Dennis is responsible for the apprenticeship training programme.

"We usually have three on the programme at a time" said Dennis. "Unfortunately, though they enjoy forestry, most of them chase better money in the mines as soon as they finish their time."

'Bush Telegraph' is the staff journal of the Forests Department in Western Australia. Any views or opinions expressed do not necessarily reflect those of the Department and articles published should not be taken as statements by the Department or the West Australian Government.

All enquiries and comments should be directed to Ian Kay, the editor, phone Como HQ ext. 329.

'People Talk'

Kirup division qualified for a safety award last week, clocking up 12 months without a lost time accident on Sunday, 12 February.

Roger Banks (the safety officer) said a 'small' celebration was being planned for the 65 people involved. Congratulations Kirup.

★ ★ ★

Keith Low has been transferred to the Protection Branch at Como, after 2½ years karri fire research at Manjimup.

A keen sportsman, Keith is particularly interested in golf and squash. (Perhaps one of the Como lunch time volley ball teams should grab him - talent is short but giggles are not.)

★ ★ ★

Bill and Verna Brennan were given a rousing send-off at Como last week. After 34 years in forestry at Kalgoorlie, Bill has many friends who joined with Pat McNamara in the presentation, reminiscences and good cheer.

★ ★ ★

February 20-24 has been nominated as "Work Safety Week". All divisions are participating in specialist lectures and demonstrations, with the aim of improving the safety record. The Fire Seminars are part of the overall programme, but other subjects include driving, chainsaws, and the use of sprays and chemicals.

Language - the need for change

This article was compiled by Di Ward largely from the paper "Language and Sexism - an Argument for change", presented by Gail Shelston to the education consultants and school counsellors of the N.S.W. Department of Education. (1981).

Part 1 : Language as an agent of social control

Why do suggestions for change in the area of sexist language seem to ignite such an emotional response from so many? After all, if language is unimportant, we shouldn't expect suggestions for change to cause too much distress.

To understand why it does disturb people we must look at the nature of language - what it is and how it functions.

Language is not merely the Oxford dictionary definition of "the whole body of words and of methods of combining them used by a nation, people or race for the expression of thought". It is also an expression of shared assumptions. It is a form of behaviour which transmits implicit values and behavioural models to all those people who use it, and as such reflects and reinforces those cultural values.

In short, language is inextricably linked with culture. It is more fundamental than mere vocabulary, which is something over which you have choice - anyone can learn a new word, an isolated addition to the system which is language. Language is something you acquire long before the age of reason. Indeed it is something which produces a person's identity. Your usage of it reflects your cultural background and indicates your relationships to the world.

Everyone is aware of this process at work in socio-economic terms - the way in which people speak places them on a socio-economic scale. The way some people use language gives them greater prestige within society. In this sense, language is an agent of social control. It works to preserve the status quo and keep people within circumscribed limits of possible behaviour. It is this dimension of language - this political dimension - that is the concern of this series of articles.

The study of the relationship between power and language, and specifically the

power of language to define relationships, has focused on discrimination based on race, sexual preference or sex. Some other stereotypes commonly perpetuated through language and attitudes relate to a person's age, physical or mental handicap, religion, politics, economic circumstances or occupation.

In the next Bush Telegraph: Sexism and Sexist Language - why we should be concerned.

WEST INDIES NEXT

On the afternoons of the 25th and 26th of January, the 2nd Year Forestry Cadets challenged the Manjimup Forestry Officers to a social game of cricket.

Manjimup officers won the toss and bowled on a flat wicket (matting), to what they thought was a weak batting line up. This proved to be fuzzy thinking, for with some fine timing and lusty hitting (and a bit of luck), the cadets made 200-8, off 30 overs.

For the cadets, Brad Barton made a fine 41 (retired), John Carter 23, Brendan Peet 22, Leon Price 21 and Rory Butcher 15 not out. John Bopp retired hurt after a direct hit to his middle stump. The officers found wickets hard to come by, partly because of the lack of ability in the field.

The next afternoon the "thirteen" strong officers team were still confident of being able to reach this mammoth score. They started off poorly, losing two quick wickets, but then a brilliant partnership between Frank Colyer and Scott Martin saw them in with a chance. Unfortunately Frank had to retire after making 45 quick runs and Scott was out later for 31. After this effort the batting went to pieces and the officers were all out for 151. Mention must be made of the fine innings of approximately 40 by a "mysterious" fourteenth batsman.

The cadets bowled well, with most of them involved in taking a wicket, but there were lapses in their fielding.

Thanks to Kevin Haylock for organizing the game and to the Manjimup officers for playing the game in such a high spirit of sportsmanship.