



Conservation News

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DEPARTMENT OF CONSERVATION
AND LAND MANAGEMENT
WESTERN AUSTRALIA

DECEMBER 2001

Thank you volunteers

THE contribution of volunteers to conservation was recognised at a celebration to mark the International Day of Volunteers at Matilda Bay earlier this month.

Environment and Heritage Minister Dr Judy Edwards presented awards and certificates of appreciation to the Department's volunteers who work in a wide range of projects conserving the environment and ecosystems.

More than 1600 people contributed almost 200,000 hours during the last year towards the Department's activities—nearly triple the 70,000 hours volunteered five years ago.

Added to that were countless hours donated by 770 wildlife carers.

Volunteers who willingly give their time and energy come from all walks of life - students, retired people, full-time and part-time workers, unemployed people and home makers.

Their activities ranged from assistance in wildlife management and research to forest research, information services, interpretation, wildflower management, visitor surveys, park planning, park management, coastal rehabilitation, erosion control, historical research and work experience.

The winners of the Volunteer of the Year awards were:

Eggy Boggs of Dalkeith who volunteers at the Shoalwater Islands; Gregg Thorn of Kalamunda who writes and publishes the Wildcare newsletter and assists with shopping centre displays and activities at The Hills Forest Discovery Centre; and Jane Scott of Witchcliffe who assisted with the Cape to Cape walk trail.

Outstanding service awards were presented to Reg Bebbington of Safety Bay, Brenda James of Yanchep, Alan Compton of Redcliffe, Denise Gillies of Dardanup and Robert and Beth Boase of Dowerin.

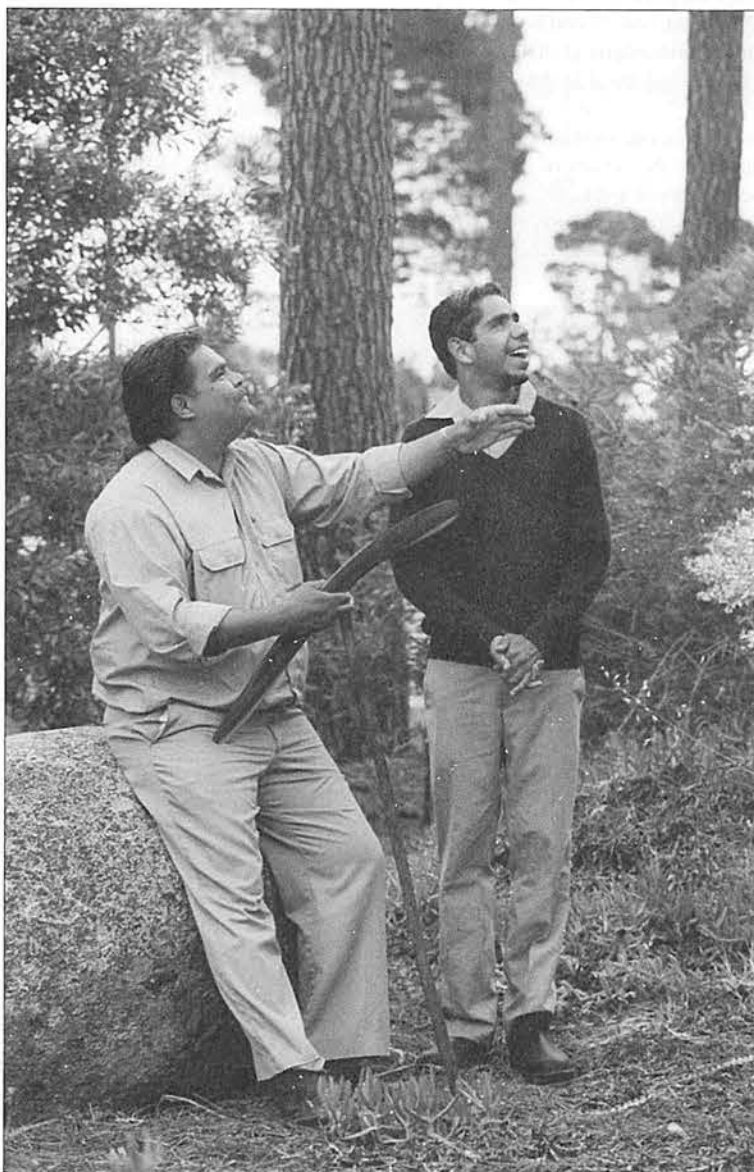


Environment and Heritage Minister, Dr Judy Edwards (centre) surrounded by the three Volunteers of the Year, Eggy Boggs (left) who has organised the roster at Penguin Island for eight years, Gregg Thorn (second from left) who writes the Wildcare newsletter and Jane Scott (right) who assisted with the Cape to Cape Walk Trail. The Department's Volunteer Co-ordinator Marg Buckland (behind the Minister) and Acting Executive Director Keiran McNamara (second from right) were also at the ceremony.

Photo by Ernie McLintock

New recruit for our heritage unit

Department of Conservation and Land Management supports the International Year of the Volunteer



Koodah Cornwall (left) and Daniel Lawrence. Photo by Norm Bailey

THE Indigenous Heritage Unit has a new addition—an enthusiastic personable 17-year-old has joined its ranks in a unique traineeship role.

Daniel Lawrence started working for the unit in July, under the guidance of Noel Nannup and Koodah Cornwall.

The traineeship—the first of its kind for the Department—involves a unique structured workplace learning placement that has been developed by Mirrabooka High School, TAFE and the Department.

It involves Daniel attending school, TAFE and a work placement as part of his education. Under this agreement, Daniel is paid to train with the Department every Wednesday.

When asked about how he likes his traineeship so far, Daniel was all smiles.

"It is a real buzz working with all

types of all people and undertaking Department's activities, particularly the guided tours, which gives me a chance to add my own style," he said.

"What I have enjoyed the most so far was the first guided tour I did at Point Walter on my own. I enjoy being asked questions from tourists and the general discussion that follows.

"I also liked being taken through Wildlife Branch and learning about how the system of wildlife protection works, and seeing seized reptiles and the equipment used for smuggling them."

Daniel said the traineeship was like a dream come true as it enabled him to be involved in the planning of his own training schedule in a field he was keen to continue in.

"My goal is to be cultural interpretative officer and to continue working with the Department after my



studies are finished," he said.

"I would really like to specialise in cultural heritage and study further and find out more about Aboriginal culture and my own roots.

"I would also like to teach and advise younger kids and provide leadership among my own people later in my life."

Indigenous Heritage Unit Manager Noel Nannup said Daniel was a valuable addition to the team and he hoped that all future training recruits were like him.

Snakes alive for volunteer

IT'S that time of the year when things start hotting up for Bruce George.

The 43-year-old is a volunteer reptile rescuer with the Department of Conservation and Land Management.

He's already receiving about five calls per day from people in the metropolitan area who may have a reptile in their backyard.

by Tracy Peacock

At the peak of summer he can get up to eight calls a day.

But it's all good fun for Bruce, a night-shift worker who has been fascinated with reptiles, he says, since childhood, and has been a reptile rescuer with the Department since 1989.

He recalls a case last year when he received a call from the police at 2.30am because a dugite had made its way from Kings Park to the steps of the Federal Police headquarters.

Being a volunteer has provided an enormous amount of pleasure for Bruce.

"I get so much satisfaction that knowing in my heart that I've saved

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Working Together

The final edition of Conservation News for 2001 provides an opportunity to reflect on the past year and look forward to opportunities and challenges in 2002 and beyond.

The change of Government in February heralded a new emphasis on conservation, particularly the protection of Western Australia's old growth forests. This year has also seen a lot of preparatory work undertaken for our priority directions in the future as a new Department of Conservation, including new parks, a State biodiversity strategy and legislation, and joint management with indigenous people.

It has, as always, been a demanding year. I would like to thank all staff for their dedication and enthusiasm throughout the year, and I believe that collectively we can look back on a job well done and considerable progress for conservation (but a lot still to do).

I would also like to welcome John Bailey as the new Chairman of the Conservation Commission of Western Australia, and thank all the members of the Commission and the Marine Parks and Reserves Authority for their contribution and support throughout the year.

As the International Year of the Volunteer draws to a close, it would be remiss of me not to also thank our numerous volunteers for their untiring work. Our volunteer program is a key part of working with the Western Australian community and the Minister for the Environment and Heritage, Hon Dr Judy Edwards MLA, took great delight in presenting awards and certificates of appreciation at a function for our volunteers on International Volunteer Day earlier this month.

I would like to extend to all staff and their families, our volunteers and our other partners in conservation, my best wishes for a happy and safe Christmas and New Year.

Keiran McNamara, Acting Executive Director



New signs for regional parks

THE Department has launched a new sign system for all of the regional parks in Perth.

The signs aim to provide a consistent park identity.

Each park has its own brand image that is designed to represent the character of each individual park.

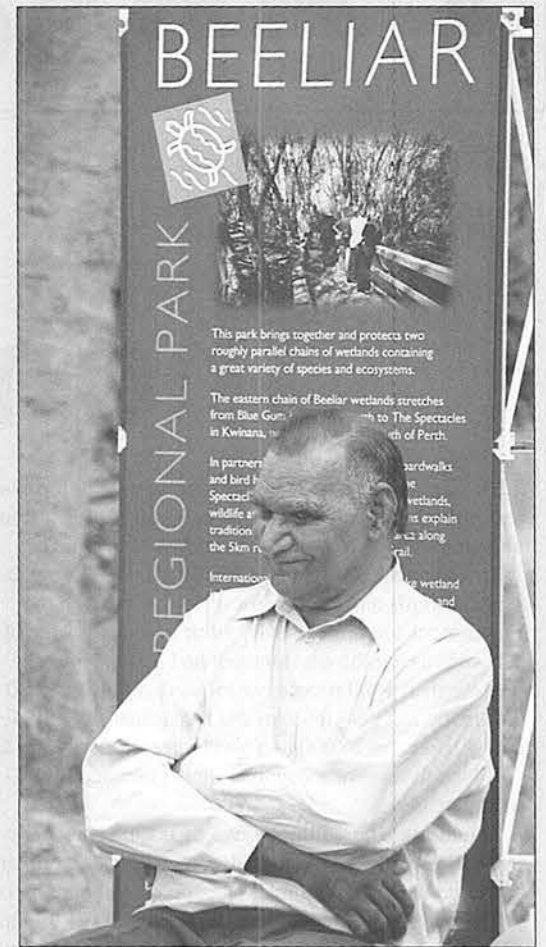
For example, Beeliar Regional Park has a tortoise as its brand image.

Every park has its own colour to match the brand image, reinforcing the identity of that park.

A new Sign System Manual for Perth's Regional Parks contains 15 types of signs for regional parks, and full specifications on how to choose, design, manufacture, install and maintain the signs.

It is anticipated that many of the local governments involved with regional parks will adopt the new sign system, providing a common means of presenting park information and management directions to the large number of park visitors.

Right: Senior traditional custodian Joe Walley is pictured with one of the new signs. He provided the information for stories depicted on trail signs. Photo by Ernie McLintock



Vernon Thorne, Hills Forest Education Officer shows Glen Forrest Primary School student, Ashley Mucciarone, the fruits of a bush tucker plant. Photo by Liz Moore

Dedication of a school bush tucker garden

by Liz Moore

IT was a hot afternoon in November but in spite of fire bans, smoke curled into the air and blew over the hard work of Glen Forrest Primary School children, teachers, parents and local community members.

The occasion was the dedication by Vernon Thorne, an Aboriginal Education Officer from The Hills Forest, of a fledgling Bush Tucker Garden. Students had helped plan, design, mulch and plant the garden. This area that had been a dust bowl but now would be a lasting reminder and acknowledgment that Noongar Aboriginal people had lived in the area.

Vernon spoke of the importance of maintaining native vegetation and the wealth of food it supplied to the traditional lives of Aboriginal people. The smoking ceremony, a

time honoured tradition, was done to cleanse a new area of evil spirits.

Teacher Cathy Levett, a keen environmentalist and the driving force behind the project, said the garden would provide the right context for students to learn about Aboriginal culture.

It was appropriate that Vernon was asked to bless this garden as Glen Forrest has strong links with the Department's EcoEducation programs through Cathy, who has taken part in many of our programs, and Maree Morisey, who is now a part-time leader of those EcoEducation programs conducted at The Hills Forest.

New Chair appointed to Conservation Commission

DR John Bailey, of Murdoch University, has been appointed Chair of the Conservation Commission of Western Australia.

Dr Bailey is Associate Professor in Environmental Assessment at the university.

In the last 16 years Dr Bailey has served on numerous Government authorities and committees, including the National Parks and Nature Conservation Authority and the

Environmental Protection Authority. He was president of the Conservation Council of WA during the mid-1980s.

Dr Bailey said he was happy to accept the invitation to Chair the Commission.

"I hope to be able to make a contribution to the development of new biodiversity conservation legislation and strategies and to bring my academic knowledge into the Government system," he said.

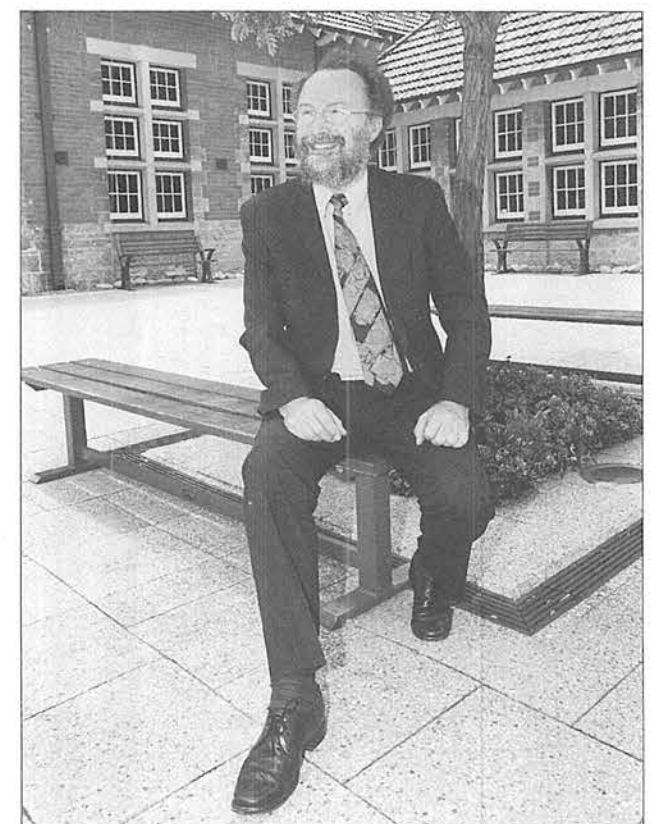
Dr Bailey said he would like to see a "cutting edge" biodiversity act in place by the time his term expires in three years.

"The biggest challenge will be to move from a species focus to a communities focus. I am also keen to broaden the vision of the Commission to areas away from lands vested in it to off-reserve biodiversity," he said.

"Any biodiversity policy needs to be owned by the community, and as part of the community, Department of Conservation and Land Management staff are vehicles through which that ownership can occur."

Dr Bailey will also chair the Forest Management Steering Committee and represent the Commission at the Round Table Discussion Group.

"I try to solve problems and to be fair to all sections of the community, and to ensure that outcomes are carefully considered and consistently applied."



Dr John Bailey outside the Constitutional Centre of WA, after a Forest Management Plan Round Table Discussion Group meeting. Photo by Ernie McLintock

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Thanks to Applecross Primary School kids

APPLECROSS Primary School has been congratulated for raising \$1000 for The Hills Forest Discovery Centre.

The Department's Senior Eco-education Officer, Liz Moore, said it was the fifth year the school had raised money, bringing the total to \$5000.

Liz said this year's fundraising had involved the whole school through "bad taste" activities on a "Bad Taste Day".

A special assembly was held at the school on 30 November and the cheque was presented to Nature Conservation Acting Director Gordon Wyre.

Gordon thanked the school for its fundraising efforts over the years and said the money would go towards ani-

mal encounter sessions at the Hills Forest.

"Students will see animals from Kanyana Wildlife Rehabilitation Centre and the money will go to breeding programs for threatened species, so it's a 'win-win' all round," he said.

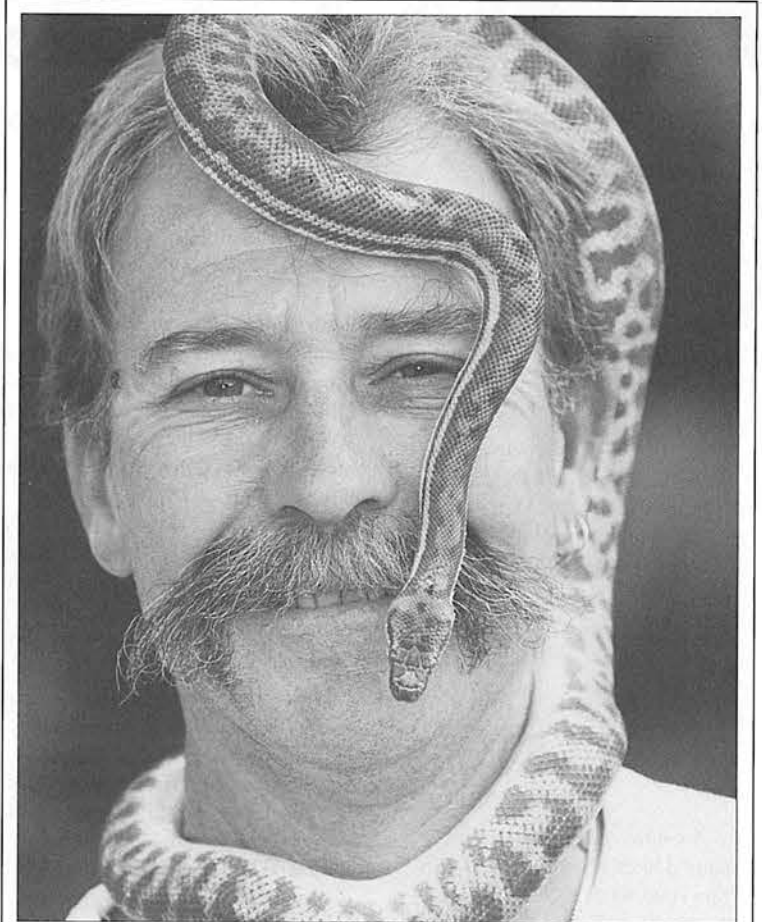
After the assembly Year 6 students showed off their internet web site where they had recorded, with sound and colour pictures, activities from a camp at the Hills Forest.

In recognition of their fundraising they had participated in the Department's Western Shield program at the Hills Forest.

They were able to see monitoring and trapping and were fortunate enough to trap a male phascogale.



Director of Nature Conservation, Gordon Wyre, with June Butcher from the Kanyana Wildlife Rehabilitation Centre and Applecross Primary School students Jay McNaught (left) and Ruby Clarke, who is holding a bilby.



Snake man Bruce George. Photo by Ernie McLintock

From page 1

this animal and it's going to live on," he says.

"It's like an ego trip—I feel so good after the rescue when I see it take off into the bush."

Bruce also cares for injured reptiles.

Last year he nursed a bobtail for about four weeks after having one of its rear limbs severed by a lawnmower.

He also volunteers his time to take part in departmental surveys concerning reptiles and is doing some volunteer research for the WA Museum looking at the feeding habits and growth rates of death adders.

So much of Bruce's time is dedicated to reptiles that he's built a "mini-hospital" in his backyard specially to look after them.

Staff changes . . . Staff changes . . .

Contracts

Sandra Hohloch, Assistant Conservation Officer, Katanning, 12 months; Wade Robinson, Graphic Designer, Strategic Development and Corporate Affairs, two months; Marg Wilkie, Communication Officer, Strategic Development and Corporate Affairs, two months; Joanne Lipinski, Officer, Strategic Development and Corporate Affairs, six months; Juliet Wege, Officer, Herbarium, three months; Gillian Stack, Technical Officer, Wildlife Branch, six months; Louise Burch, Design Studio Officer, Planning and Visitors Services; Charles Bellamy, Assistant Architectural Draftsperson, Recreation and Site Design, three months; Tim Firth, Planning Officer, Planning and Visitor Services, Manjimup, six months; David Chadwick, Seasonal Ranger, Esperance; Samantha Read, Officer, Collie, 12 months; Sara Robinson, Conservation Officer (Salinity), Katanning, three years; Lisa Pavlovic, Officer, Fire Management Services, three months.

Transfers

Chris Mather, from Karijini National Park to Marine and Coastal District Fremantle; Richard McAlinden, from Dwellingup District Office to People Services, Kensington; Charles Nicholson, from Department of Environmental Protection to Wildlife Branch, Kensington; Clive Coshan, from Financial Services to People Services; Peter Curry, Department of Environmental Protection to Wildlife Branch, Kensington; Claire Barrow, from wages staff to

Clerical Officer, Yanchep National Park; John Gault, from Regional Business Administration and Finance to Kununurra.

Secondment

Maxine Chi, from Parks, Policy and Tourism to office of Aboriginal Economic Development, Industry and Technology, 12 months.

Resignation

Michelle Page, Officer, Regional Services Kalgoorlie.

Contract ceased

Linda Broadhurst, Research Scientist, Herbarium; Christine Hollister, Technical Officer, Herbarium; Fleur Clifton, Field Officer, People Services, Dwellingup.

Maternity leave

Cathy Birch, Strategic Development and Corporate Affairs, Kensington.

Temporary transfer

Jennie Cary, from Marine Conservation Branch, Fremantle, to Exmouth (District Manager), two years.

Reclassification

Alan Danks, Regional Leader Nature Conservation, Albany.

Criteria progression

Val English, Ecologist, WA Threatened Species Unit.

Temporary deployments

Ian Wheeler, Regional Services Division, Manjimup to Science Division, Manjimup, 12 months; Tim Brett, Field Officer, from Dwellingup to Esperance, two months; Alanna Chant, Operations officer, to Geraldton, six months.

Permanent appointment

Alice Reaveley, Field Officer, Regional Services Division, Moora.

200 years of Herbarium history

WHEN botanist Robert Brown was rowed ashore from the sailing ship *The Investigator* in King George Sound in Albany in 1801, he created a legacy lasting two centuries.

The English 'scientific gentleman' was one of six 'scientific gentlemen' on board the ship as it navigated the southern coastline of New Holland in search of new discoveries.

Robert Brown collected 3600 flora specimens during the Captain Matthew Flinders New Holland and New South Wales expedition from 1801 to 1805. About 650 were collected in Western Australia near Perth, Albany and Esperance.

Specimens collected by Brown at the first landfall at Albany are the oldest in the State Herbarium's collection and are on display at the Alexander Library in Perth as part of the 'From Flinders to Florabase' exhibition organised by Herbarium botanist, Jan Gathe.

The historical specimens, faded and dried but still perfectly pressed—including a Humped Leek Hooded Lily Orchid collected in December 1801—will take pride of place in the exhibition honoring his work and the development of botanical knowledge of Western Australia's unique and diverse flora.

Jan—a history buff—admitted she volunteered to organise the exhibition because she thought it would be fun.

"It was a lot more work than I anticipated but a very worthwhile project," she said.

The exhibition was officially opened by English botanist David Moore from London's Natural History Museum.

With the help of Alexander Library exhibition designer and co-



Botanist Robert Brown.

ordinator Penny McKay, the exhibition took a week to set up and features many interesting exhibits, including a book published in 1810 listing the plants Robert Brown discovered on his voyage, Flinders' book 'Voyage to Terra Australis' and a reproduction of a painting by artist

Ferdinand Bauer (also a 'scientific gentleman' explorer) of a plant named after Brown, the *Brunonia australis*, which is one of the leschenaultia family.

The State Herbarium now houses more than half a million specimens amassed by botanists and amateur plant lovers in two centuries, and is fully automated using a program known as Florabase. The exhibition shows the way botany has progressed from being a collection of pressed specimens to becoming a computerised database accessible to the world.

Robert Brown returned to England with 2200 Australian plant species of which 1700 were new to science.

After his return he became librarian of Sir Joseph Banks' huge collection of books at manuscripts, devoting his life to working on plant cell structure, distribution and genetics.

Take the time to visit the exhibition, which is open to the public until the end of January.



Jan Gathe (left) and Penny McKay setting up exhibition at Alexander Library. Photo by Sue McKenna

Celebration of 100th Interim Recovery Plan

Money to save rare seeds

Western Australia has been given \$1.2 million for the conservation of native flora.

The Department's Science Division Principal Research Scientist, Dave Coates, described the funding from the Royal Botanical Gardens, Kew in the United Kingdom, as "highly significant".

The funding will be used for WA flora conservation projects. Seeds will be collected from about 1400 rare and poorly known species during the next 10 years.

Wildflower passion lives on

A nature reserve has been named after Toodyay conservation stalwart Mavis Jefferys—a descendant of early settlers and passionate about Toodyay's history, the local community and wildflowers.

The Mavis Jefferys Nature Reserve, five kilometres southwest of the town, honours Mrs Jefferys' vision and commitment to conserving the area's biodiversity.

Significant native species include plume smokebush and a heath rush (*Chordifex chaunocoleus*) which was removed from the declared rare flora list only last August.

Observatory Volunteers awarded two grants

The Perth Observatory Volunteer Group has won the \$1000 National Australia Bank CommunityLink Volunteer Award and a \$3600 International Year of the Volunteer grant from the Commonwealth Department of Family and Community.

Some of the money will be used to buy jackets to keep the volunteers warm when they show visitors the stars at Perth Observatory.

Government Astronomer Dr Jamie Biggs said the awards recognised the enthusiasm and dedication of the Observatory's volunteers and their invaluable contribution to its operations.

Thanks to 4WD volunteers at Avon Valley NP

Jim Maher has acknowledged the hundreds of hours of volunteer work by the Eastern Suburbs 4WD Club.

The Avon Valley National Park Ranger described their volunteer work as "terrific".

"Their work has been very, very useful," Jim said.

Club members have removed old car bodies, built new toilets, constructed 115 metres of stone retaining walls and acted as gate marshalls during the annual Avon Descent.

In return, the club can drive around the boundary of the Avon Valley National Park when the conditions were right, Jim said.

NATURE Conservation Division's WA Threatened Species and Communities Unit staff recently celebrated the approval of the 100th Interim Recovery Plan.

Current staff along with some of the previous project officers who were employed to write or implement these plans (many of whom are now spread far and wide) and people who provided valuable advice in the writing of the plans, often as co-authors, got together to celebrate the achievement.

Biodiversity Conservation Deputy Director, Dr Andrew Burbidge (formerly WATSCU Director), paid tribute to the commitment and hard work of WATSCU staff and supporters.

He said WA continued to lead the nation in the production and implementation of recovery plans for species and ecological communities.

Interim Recovery Plans are mostly written for critically endangered threatened species and ecological communities to prescribe urgent recovery actions needed to address the threatening processes most affecting their ongoing survival.

These plans are developed within the framework of the Department's policy statements Nos. 44 and 50 and are approved by the Nature Conservation Director.

IRPs usually operate for three years but remain in force until withdrawn or replaced. If a taxon is still ranked as critically endangered at the end of the three years, it will

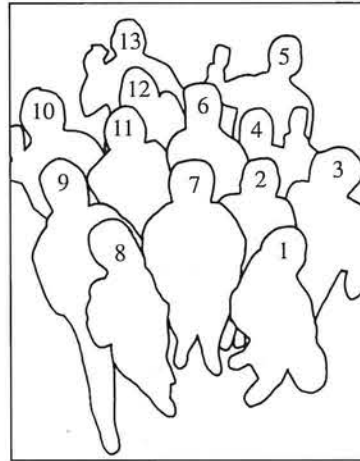
by Jill Pryde

usually be replaced by a full recovery plan.

The first IRPs were written in 1995, however, it wasn't until 1997 when WATSCU employed specialist project officers with funds provided by the Commonwealth's Endangered Species Program (now part of the Natural Heritage Trust) that the bulk of the flora and ecological communities plans were written.

There are currently 73 flora, nine fauna and 19 ecological communities covered by IRPs. The Commonwealth has now adopted 40 of these plans under the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999*.

This Act includes provisions for ecological communities, which are not yet recognised in WA legislation.



1 Gillian Stack, 2 Leonie Monks, 3 Allan Burbidge, 4 Sheila Hamilton-Brown, 5 Andrew Burbidge, 6 John Blyth, 7 Greg Keighery, 8 Sally Black, 9 Diana Papenfus, 10 Jill Pryde, 11 Val English, 12 Robyn Phillimore, 13 Andrew Brown. Photo by Ernie McLintock



Chris Stewart pictured learning snake husbandry skills from expert Bob Cooper. Photo by Mike Casley, Unit Leader CALM Bush Rangers Rossmoyne Senior High School

Bush Rangers alive and well

by Bronwyn Humphreys

THE CALM Bush Rangers program is now in its fourth year and many who started in the first year, such as Chris Stewart, are still very active.

Chris, a Year 11 ranger at Rossmoyne Senior High School, has volunteered more than 450 hours in three years to nature conservation from Ningaloo Reef to Margaret River as well as at the creek and bush area behind the school.

He has contributed to the development of a dedicated environment centre at the school and the unit propagates and plants a range of endemic species for the local Rossmoyne area.

Chris has worked with a variety of conservation community groups including CRREPER, Native Arc wildlife carers and Hamelin Bay conservation groups.

He has completed the nationally accredited Basic Bush Fire Awareness course with Fire Management Services at Dwellingup.

His peers nominated him for the unit's Ranger of the Quarter award in recognition of his commitment and leadership.

Chris has been selected by the Bush Rangers program to sail this month on the Leeuwin with 39 other Bush Rangers where they will gain the nationally accredited Certificate II of Leadership.

And what does Chris do in his spare time? Chris volunteered his services to Yanchep National Park for two weeks last month.

Meanwhile, about 1200 Bush Rangers from Broome to Kalgoorlie, and Kalbarri to Kellerberrin are being empowered to use the national protocols for owl monitoring.

The Department's owl expert and Recovery Catchment Officer, Ian Wheeler, showed Bush Rangers from Roleystone, Gosnells, Waroona, Northam, Rossmoyne and Mt Lawley how little we know about WA owls.

Ian said the rangers' work in monitoring different owl populations would add greatly to current information.

Big Brook attracts plenty of takers

by Tammie Reid

EIGHTEEN teams travelled to a misty, drizzly Big Brook picnic site in Pemberton to do battle in the Department's annual relay last month.

There was a great turnout from Perth staff, with a mid west team making the long trek south again this year.

Teams ranged from highly trained to loosely arranged. Many members were still negotiating what leg they would (or wouldn't) do just before the start.

The relay included cycling, Canadian canoeing, crosscut sawing, swimming and running sections, all based around the Big Brook Dam, one of our major picnic sites in the karri forests, a beautiful place.

This year's winners in convincing style—in spite of protests and various post relay swabs and testings—were the Bunbury Coneheads, representing the FPC Plantations group. The Kirup team (aptly named Kirup) turned up second, with third place going to Proton Pills (Herbarium/Woodvale) . . .

Honourable mention must go to the winners of the derriere award (a beautiful, hand crafted, shoeoak toilet seat) bestowed on a warrior women's team from Kensington (team name ***** censored) who have vowed to return and not win this one again.

The relay is an important and

valued staff tradition and has been organised by the Pemberton District (now Donnelly) for 15 years.

Older staff members try to maintain their positions in their relay teams. Long time competitors including Lachie McCaw, Dave Hampton, Peter Ryan are doing well to hang in there.

The day's rivalry incorporates the annual Pemberton tug of war challenge - usually so rigged that Pemberton go straight into the grand final and take off the prize year after year.

Something went awry with master of ceremonies, Dave Meehan's heat selections and the proud winners recorded for 2001 were Dwellingup.

Bunbury's Lunch Time Legends claim to have won the volleyball, but then again they were desperate to do well at anything after another year of thwarted victory dreams. In reality, rain stopped play and celebrations retired to the social club at the Donnelly District Office.

The wet weather did little to dampen the spirits as people caught up, cheered each other on and enjoyed the atmosphere and camaraderie of the day.

As Dave Meehan was heard to say . . . at least it didn't rain (Pemberton style)!

Many thanks go to Rod Annear, Dave Meehan and the Pemberton staff who turn on the hospitality and organise a great event year after year . . .