



Conservation News

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DEPARTMENT OF CONSERVATION
AND LAND MANAGEMENT
WESTERN AUSTRALIA

FEBRUARY 2002

\$2 million for works in new national parks

by Mitzi Vance

MORE than \$2 million will be spent by the Department in the next six months on protecting and developing visitor facilities for new parks in the south-west.

Parks and Visitor Services Director Jim Sharp said the \$2,050,000 was the 2001-2002 capital component of the four year allocation of \$25.686 million provided to the Department by the State Government as part of its commitment to establish 30 new parks in the south-west of WA as part of its *Protecting our old-growth forests policy*.

Steering group

Jim said a Steering Group had been established within the Department of Conservation and Land Management to help determine priorities and integrate the planning and implementation of the program. The group comprises Departmental staff from the regions and the Parks and Visitors Service Division.

"The group's aim is to facilitate a coordinated approach to community consultation, management planning and design initiatives associated with the new parks," he said.

"It will also provide advice on the budgeting and accounting of funds and ensure that Departmental priorities and standards are reflected in the new park's works program."

Submissions

Jim said he had requested submissions from the regions on costed work programs to enable them to be incorporated into the 2001-2002 budget so that works could begin.

"At this stage, we have a number of works programs under way in new parks—some of them are major projects which will significantly add to visitor experiences" he said.

Projects that have begun and are to be completed by June this year include:

- Construction of a \$350,000 upgrade of Lennard Drive and south of River Road in Wellington NP.
- \$50,000 for improved access to boat launching at Chapman Pool camping area in Blackwood River NP.
- \$100,000 for works in progress for the development of day use and interpretation facilities in Giblett forest.
- \$250,000 earmarked for a Perup Visitor Centre to service new parks east of Manjimup, currently in the planning stage.

Work is currently in progress on the development of new visitor facilities in Warren National Park at a cost of \$250,000.

Four \$100 000 projects are in the planning stage on the development of visitor facilities in new parks in the Walpole area.



Goldfields Regional Manager Ian Kealley (left) and the Acting Curator of the WA Museum in Kalgoorlie-Boulder, Terry McLaffery, on the chev truck. Photo courtesy of the Kalgoorlie Miner.

Taking the old road home . . .

A 1927 CHEV truck used by sandalwood 'puller' and Goldfields identity, the late Bill Savage, has returned to Kalgoorlie.

It arrived on February 7 and attracted considerable local interest.

The Department, which bought the vehicle in 1995 from Mr Savage's estate, has donated the truck to the WA Museum Kalgoorlie-Boulder (Museum of the Goldfields).

It will be used as part of the historical sandalwood industry interpretation display.

The Department has used the vehicle at events, mainly in Perth over the past few years, and decided it would play a

more important historical and educational role in the Goldfields.

Mr Savage, who died in 1994 aged 89, prospected and pulled sandalwood for most of life around Laverton and east of Kalgoorlie near Karonie.

Even in 1989 and aged 84 he spent weeks at a time at his rustic bush-pole tent camp, 140kms east of Kalgoorlie pulling his annual quota of 50 tonnes of dead sandalwood.

The Department's Acting Executive Director, Keiran McNamara, said it was appropriate that the truck was being returned to the Goldfields in 2002 which was the Year of the Outback.



Bruce Withnell and John Angus, from Woodvale, have morning tea during a cross country transect of Faure Island. (Inset) Dave Algar. Photograph by Norman Bailey.

Faure Island may become wildlife sanctuary without feral cats

Feral cat control strategies developed by the Department may provide the techniques needed for effective feral cat eradication from many islands around the world.

The successful baiting of Faure Island in the Shark Bay region last year resulted in the eradication of the entire feral cat population in several days.

Other feral cat eradication programs throughout the world have taken months or years to complete so the Department's success is outstanding.

More feral cat eradication programs are planned for other

islands off the Western Australian coast, the research scientist in charge of the Department's cat control programs, Dave Algar, said.

Faure Island is leased by the Australian Wildlife Conservancy and is to become a wildlife sanctuary. The AWC hopes to translocate five native mammal species to the island: the Western Barred Bandicoot (*Perameles bougainville*), Boodie (*Bettongia lesueur*), Greater Stick Nest Rat (*Leporillus conditor*), Shark Bay Mouse (*Pseudomys fieldi*) and the Banded Hare Wallaby (*Lagostrophus fasciatus*). AWC

funded the cat eradication work undertaken by Dave Algar and John Angus from Science Division at Woodvale, and Rob Brazell, Christina Gilbert and Bruce Withnell from Regional Services, Wellington District.

Dave said the feral cats were probably introduced to Faure Island from pearling vessels or early pastoralists in the late nineteenth century and probably contributed to the extinction of native animal species.

Faure Island is thought to be the second largest island in the world where feral cats have successfully been eradicated.

Working Together

Early March will see the launch of a new Departmental Code of Conduct as well as a new Good Working Relations Policy and Online Program.

The Departmental Code of Conduct is a 'user guide' to ethical decision making and action. It provides practical information and guidance for evaluating our behaviour and decisions as Departmental employees.

The foundation on which the Department's Code is built is the new WA public sector Code of Ethics, a public statement of ethical principles, values and behaviours expected of public sector employees.

Behaving ethically includes maintaining a workplace that is free from all forms of bullying, discrimination, harassment and victimisation. The Good Working Relations Policy and Online Program have been developed in conjunction with the Equal Opportunity Commission to raise awareness of these behaviours and the need for their elimination in the workplace, and to provide information about how to deal with any grievances that might arise.

The Online Program is the first of its kind in Australia, and will be accessible from the CALMweb in early March, as will the Code of Ethics and Code of Conduct.

Another area of attention currently by People Services Branch and Corporate Executive is the development (by May this year) of the Department's workforce objectives in response to the Government's Equity and Diversity Plan.

As part of our commitment to joint management and increased representation of indigenous people in our workforce, the Department has recently signed an agreement for a training program for up to 18 indigenous people with the aim of full-time employment in the Department.

Keiran McNamara
Acting Executive Director



Working on the future of South-west forests

MONTHS of intensive Departmental work have produced a public discussion paper to help develop the next 10-year management plan for the south-west forests.

The 137-page discussion paper was released by the Conservation Commission of Western Australia last month and is being studied by the timber industry, conservationists, other State Government agencies, indigenous organisations, employee groups, politicians and the general community.

Members of the public have until March 25 to make submissions.

Conservation Commission Chairman Dr John Bailey said the Commission was keen to receive a broad range of submissions from the public.

"The management of our native forests is an issue that is high in the minds of the community and the Commission values community input," he said.

"We particularly want to receive submissions that propose constructive comments on the objectives and strategies for forest management as well as suggesting alternatives."

Dr Bailey said the discussion paper was part of the process of developing the next forest management plan. The next stage would involve a draft forest management plan incorporating the outcomes of a range of reviews

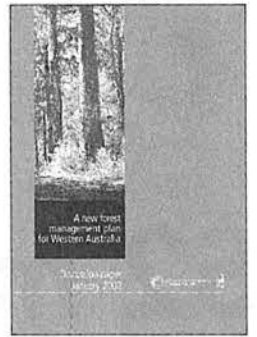
including the assessment of high conservation value forest and updated silvicultural guidelines.

The draft forest management plan should be available by July and the final plan was expected to be ready for assessment by the Environmental Protection Authority by December.

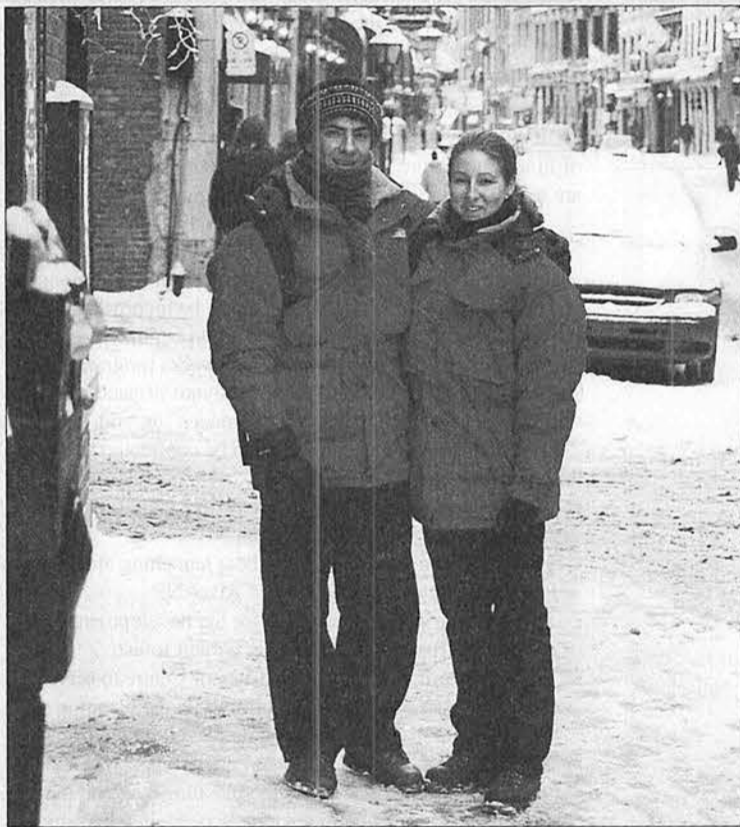
A second round of community forums is scheduled after the draft management plan is released to invite more public discussion. A round table discussion group of community and industry representatives provides comments on a regular basis.

Dr Bailey said the discussion paper included updated information on the implementation of the Government's *Protecting our old-growth forests policy*, which will increase the area of conservation reserves by around 200,000 hectares and protect the remaining 333,000 hectares of old-growth forest.

Copies of the discussion paper are at the Commission's website www.conservation.wa.gov.au



Exciting study year in Canada



John Lloyd and his fiancée Carissa Bathgate in Quebec City in Canada during a study break from Dalhousie University in Halifax. Carissa formerly worked in the Department's Land Administration Section.

I HAVE just been fortunate enough to experience one of the most exciting and enriching periods of my life.

From September 2000-October 2001 I lived in Halifax, on the east coast of Canada, and undertook a Master of Marine Management degree at Dalhousie University.

I had been granted leave without pay from my district manager position at Mundaring.

I found the course very intense, challenging and stimulating. It is well deserving of its outstanding international reputation.

My thesis dealt with linkages between marine park plans, financial resource allocation and the marine park manager.

In particular, it examines a framework to guide and support financial allocation decisions for marine conservation actions in settings where there are insufficient funds to achieve all of the desired conservation actions.

This is a management problem that constantly challenges us at the Department.

The Department supported my studies by awarding the George

by John Lloyd

Malajczuk scholarship which greatly assisted me in meeting university and living expenses.

The Master of Marine Management strengthened my knowledge and experience in natural resource management. I hope it will enable me to make a strong commitment to marine and coastal conservation.

I was also sponsored by Rotary International as an 'ambassadorial scholar'.

In this role I attended many Rotary meetings as well as assisting with fundraising and community projects.

I learnt a lot from my Canadian friends and Rotarians, as well as the 19 international students in my class.

From beautiful forests of rich autumn colours, to my first "white Christmas", to abundant winter snow for snow skiing, ice-clad frozen lakes for wobbly attempts at ice-skating, to a warm summer of kayaking, swimming and water skiing, and of course mountains of hard study, it was a truly remarkable and challenging year.

Records management in action

by Tammie Reid

THE Department's Corporate Information Services Manager, Jenny Moss, and her team of two went on a three and a half week paper chase in Bunbury recently.

Jenny (who's also our Freedom of Information Co-ordinator), Client Services Co-ordinator, Sue Adams, and contract records specialist, Leanne Traynor, closed nearly 1500 business files and opened 700 during an intensive operation aimed at integrating the records system across the Department.

The Bunbury office's records can now be accessed from anywhere in the organisation. Information is easily identified, accessed and shared. Local centres remain the custodians of their records.

Jenny said the way records were kept reflected the way the Department operated.

"The new system assists day to day business and FOI response times, Ministerials, Parliamentary questions and annual report collations," she said.

The move to update the records system grew from the time of the Moora floods when David Rose asked for help to re-establish the damaged or destroyed information records system.

"The Moora crisis meant we started working outside in districts and regions earlier than expected," she said.

Jenny said the work was specialised and intense, devising a flexible classification system.

The next step is to set up systems for the Conservation Commission, the Forest Products Commission, and the Department's South Coast, Busselton and Collie offices.

Training, coaching and support are provided for administration staff.

Busy month for our fire crews

FIRE Management Services fire crews had one of their busiest months last month when they attended 176 wildfires.

In mid-January fire crews had one of the worst weeks in 10 years, suppressing 55 fires in national parks, nature reserves and State forests from Pilbara to the south coast. All were caused by lightning.

In the south-west forest areas, the Department, with support from Forest Products Commission officers and local volunteer bush fire brigades, attended 46 fires in five days.

Director of Regional Services, Alan Walker, said the fact that so many fires were contained to small areas was a significant achievement. The biggest fire was in State forest near North Dandalup Dam, north of Dwellingup, which burned 225 hectares.

"We were able to detect the fires in the south-west areas very early and dispatch crews quickly but we also had some luck on our side as even though the temperatures were high and in some areas the fuel loadings were heavy,

the winds were relatively light," he said.

"This meant crews were able to get to the vast majority of the fires before they developed. Had there been hot, strong winds, then the situation would have been very different and crews would have been battling major forest wildfires.

"The five water bombers based in Bunbury and Perth and the Department's spotter aircraft fleet and lookout towers played a major part in detecting and combating the fires.

"The bombers were effective in knocking down the headfire on many occasions, enabling ground crews to establish containment lines."

November was also a busy month for fire crews with 92 fires, followed by December with 73 fires.

Most of last month's fires occurred in the Mundaring District (46) followed by Mornington (36) and Perth (34).

Ten fires occurred in the South West Capes, 11 around Dwellingup with the rest occurring throughout the State.

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Former sawmill worker on top of the world

by Sue McKenna

"I'VE got the cubby I always wanted as a boy!"

So says Harry Everett who climbs 52 metres into the forest canopy each day scanning the horizon for signs of smoke in the forest regions around Pemberton and Manjimup.

He has an office with a view atop the Diamond Tree near Pemberton where "the views are almost as great as mixing with tourists from around the globe."

Harry (36) was retrenched from a south-west sawmill at Christmas last year. He said he loved the new job and spotted 18 fires in January, "none of them developing into big fires" because of his quick action.

When he sees smoke, he plots the co-ordinates and calls the Pemberton office from his tree-phone with the information. A fire crew or a plane is sent by the office to investigate.

Harry has 30-kilometre 360-degree views but said he'd spotted a fire 120 kilometres away at Frankland. He also saw the smoke from the fuel tanker that exploded at Balingup.

Tourists

The tree is a magnet for tourists and locals. Three hundred people climbed the spiral spokes during the school holidays, always stopping for a chat if they ventured as far as Harry's office, two levels above the public viewing platform.

Harry's visitors' book is getting full and, says Harry, there's never a dull moment.

"Although I am spotting for fires, I also provide information about camping facilities, tourist spots and natural attractions," he said.

Fire spotters were once regularly employed by the Department but the use of planes from the 1970s saw the numbers drop.

However, they have been employed at the Diamond Tree for the last three months. Other lookouts are at Mt Frankland, Kirup, Margaret River and Collie but Harry is the only one to work in a tree—the other lookouts are towers.

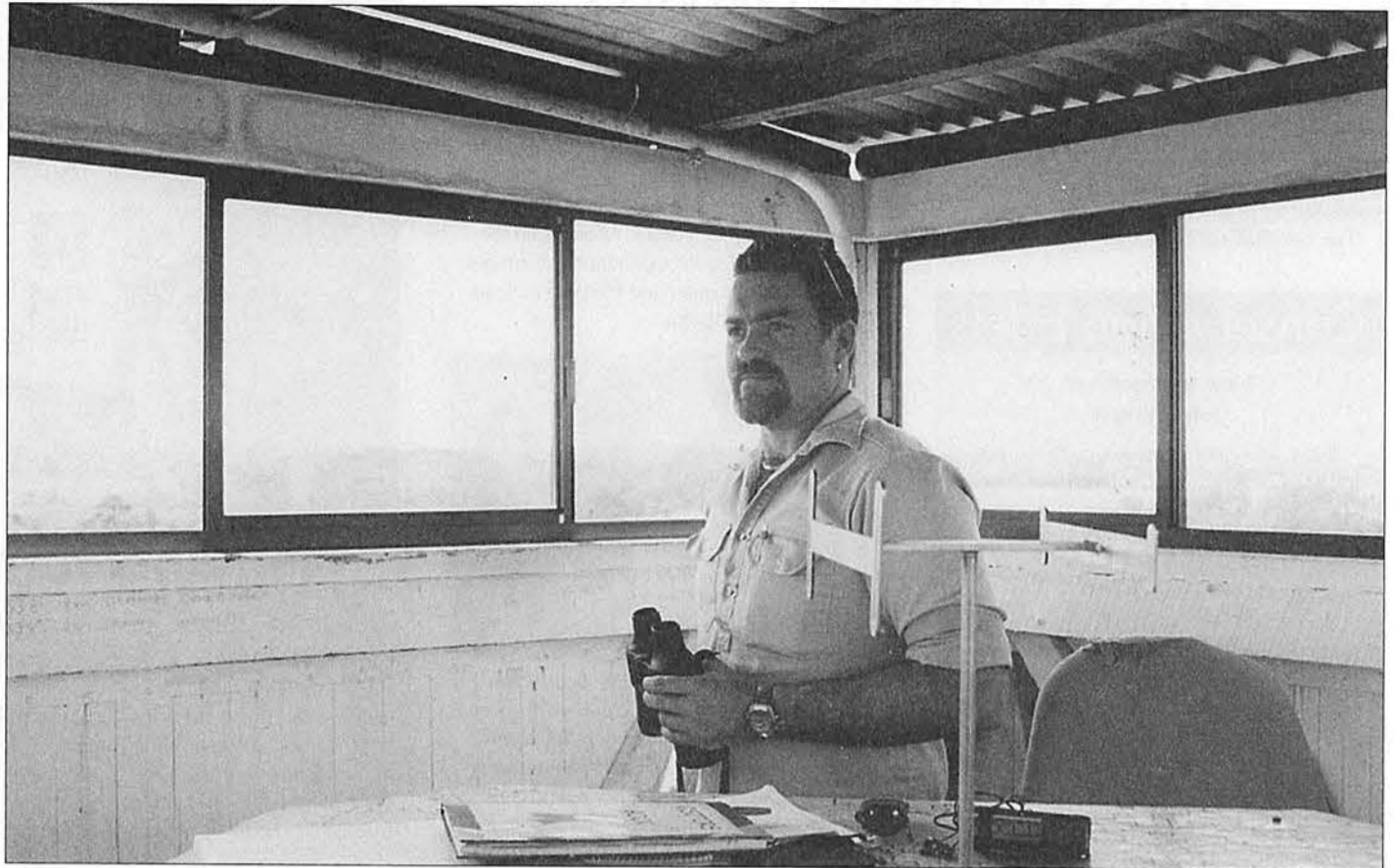
Local

Harry has lived in the region most of his life spending 16 years working at the Pemberton sawmill.

"I saw the tower person advertisement in the local paper and was one of eight to apply.

"I wasn't confident in the beginning so I was over the moon to get the job and am thoroughly enjoying it. I have a great office with a magnificent view," he said.

Harry is one of a number of displaced timber workers now working for the Department. We'll feature more stories in subsequent editions.



Displaced timber worker Harry Everett in his Diamond Tree cubby house in the south-west. He spotted 18 fires in January. Photo by Tim Foley.



Studio beckons staff for radio stint

Marine and Coastal Districts Ranger John Edwards and Indigenous Heritage Unit Manager Noel Nannup will be soon be helping students to learn English as a second language. Both were recently asked to participate in the production of resources for teaching English as a second language by educational production company English From Oz. Both headed down to the studios and donned the 'radio star' earphones to record their interviews, where they are pictured with Chloe from the Production Company.

John handled the first interview 'The Day in the Life of an Australian Park Ranger' with great aplomb. Noel then moved in and his expert knowledge of 'Bush Medicine and Food' was tested. Both really enjoyed the experience and were happy to be helping in the production of educational resources for fellow Western Australians. Photo by John Hunter.

Albany office gets new display

THE Department's Albany office has undergone a major revamp with a new visitor centre being created.

South Coast Region Parks and Visitor Services program leader Peter Bidwell said front counter staff conducted a survey of public inquiries to determine what information visitors were seeking at the office.

"People mainly wanted to know about the national parks, what they could do there, what facilities were available and so on," Peter said.

"We then set about coming up with a display that would give people most of the information they were getting from talking to front counter staff.

"Interpretation Officer Corinn Hine developed a set of information panels which we have put up in a room off the foyer.

"The room has been remodelled, with polished jarrah floorboards—discovered under the old carpet—new storage cupboards, polished benches made from local timbers, a new lighting system and a fresh lick of paint.

"The results are fantastic and are a credit to our front office staff."

Two thousand years of fire service recognised

A STAGGERING 2,000 years of accumulated fire fighting service has been recognised with the presentation of prestigious national medals and clasps.

Environment Minister Dr Judy Edwards presented 110 Department and Forest Products Commission officers, crews and support staff with the highly-regarded awards.

The medal is awarded for 15 years' service, while clasps for each subsequent 10 years' service.

Held on January 25, the ceremony acknowledged several staff who had given more than 35 years' service to the Department's fire management and protection operations.

The Department's Fire Management Services Manager Rick Sneeuwjagt said it

was important to recognise the expertise and dedication of fire services staff in dealing with a high risk area such as fire.

He said the medals and clasps, awarded through the Governor-General's office, were something that recipients could reflect on and be proud of.

"What's not recognised is what their families endure as they are often away on weekends and nights – but they do that as part of the job," Rick said.

Rick said participants at the Minister's presentation came from nearly all regions throughout WA and many were accompanied by their partners and family.

Presentations will be held in rural areas during the year for those who were unable to attend the Perth presentation on January 25.



From left: Graham Liddelow, Rod Simmonds, Graham Norrish, Ian Wilson and Peter Keppel. Photo by Ernie McLintock.

LANDSCOPE calendar wins printing award

THIS year's LANDSCOPE calendar has collected a prestigious printing and design award.

The Printing Industry of Australia (WA Division) Craftsman Award (PICA) is hotly contested by printing firms.

The LANDSCOPE calendar was designed

and produced by the Department's Graphic Design Section in Strategic Development and Corporate Affairs and took out the silver award. The printer was Scott Print, of Perth.

The gold award went to the Argyle Diamond calendar.

Calendar designer Tiffany Aberin said the new-look LANDSCOPE calendar used images covering the entire state, and featured a clean, simple and usable design.



Pictured with the award were Scott Print's general manager, Andrew Neale with (from left) the Department's acting publications manager, Sue McKenna; supervising senior graphic designer Maria Duthie and senior graphic designer Tiffany Aberin. Photo by David Gough.

Conservation briefs

New tea rooms at John Forrest

Lady Margaret Forrest's contribution to the conservation of native flora was recognised with the opening of the new Margaret Forrest Centre at WA's oldest national park—John Forrest National Park.

As part of centenary celebrations for the park, the Department refurbished the historic tearooms into a new visitor centre at a cost of \$60,000.

Lady Forrest was the wife of Sir John Forrest, the first Premier of WA and the man who proclaimed the first national park in the State.

Lady Margaret was a botanical artist and more than 70 pieces of her works are now in the WA Art Gallery.

Go Bush a success

Hundreds of people flocked to the Department's Go Bush summer 2002 activities in Perth last month.

Organised by the Department's Nearer to Nature section the activities were a big hit—especially the evening events associated with water such as paddling down the Canning River by moonlight.

Acting manager Iris Flenady said 25 guides took nature lovers on a series of activities at Herdsman Lake Regional Park, Canning River, Woodman Point Reserve, the Swan Estuary Park, John Forrest National Park, Star Swamp at Trigg and the Hills Forest Discovery Centre.

Iris said it was a great success and was the first of the four seasonal Go Bush 2002 activities planned for the rest of the year.

NatureBase features in literacy test

The Department's website NatureBase will be used by the Queensland School Curriculum Council as part of Queensland's school literacy test.

The assessments are for year three, five and seven students.

NatureBase receives around 1.5 million hits a month.

Bush Rangers recognised

A CALM Bush Ranger Unit Leader, Ann Coppins, and Senior CALM Bush Ranger Catherine Bryant were recognised at the Australia Day 2002 awards held in the town of Victoria Park.

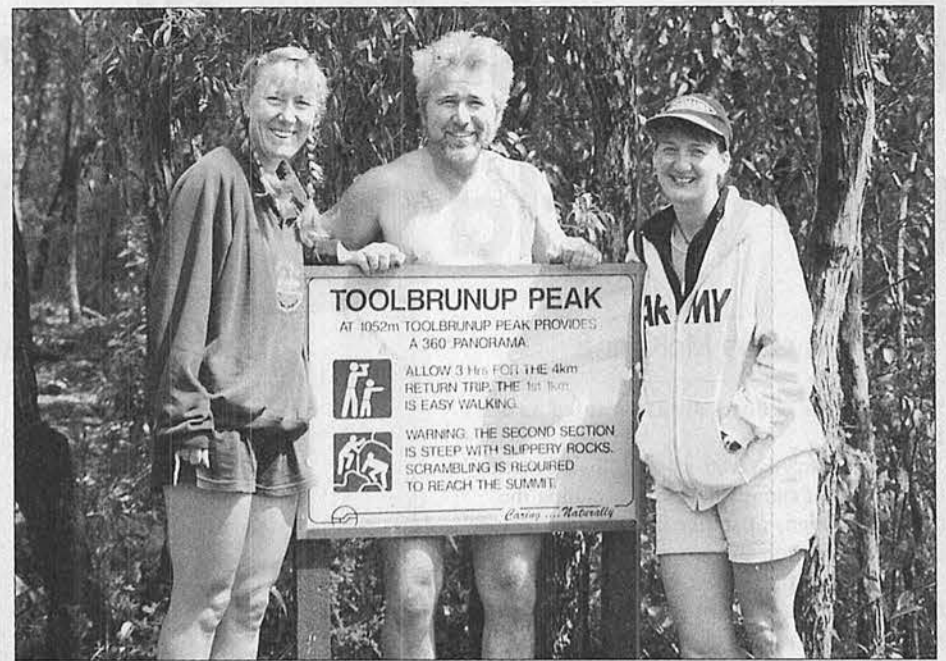
Both made a tremendous commitment to volunteer their time to conservation projects in Victoria Park and at the Fauna Rehabilitation Foundation in Malaga by contributing more than 700 hours to nature conservation.

New CALM Bush Rangers at Katanning

Thirty Katanning students are the latest recruits to the CALM Bush Ranger program, joining 1100 Bush Rangers across the Western Australia.

Their first job will be to head to the bush around Walpole to explore the region's biodiversity by canoe.

State Co-ordinator of the CALM Bush Ranger program, Bronwyn Humphreys, said the Katanning unit started with "tremendous backing" from community leaders.



Having fun in the Stirlings

"Here's a silly photo of Alex Moylett on a hiking weekend in the Stirlings," writes his friend Cindi Herd of Waroona. Alex (a Departmental dieback specialist based in Bunbury) agreed to show Cindi and Jamie Herd the full sights and attractions of Bluff Knoll in the Stirling Ranges, near Mount Barker recently. We stopped short of asking about getting back to nature when Alex suggested taking out a damage licence on Cindi, adding we should write a caption about the scratchiness of the bush. "I assure you, there were pants on behind the sign," he signed off. We butted out, leaving the chilly winds to blow yonder. Cindi said it was a great weekend filled with spectacular scenery. Hmmm. Alex is pictured with his wife Jasmine (left) and Cindi.

Legacy of botanist and Latin scholar

by Sue McKenna

A FRIENDSHIP between a botanist and a Latin scholar is the catalyst for an exhibition to be held at the New Norcia Benedictine Community museum later this year.

The magnificent art work of enigmatic Government botanist Charles Gardner (one of the first Herbarium directors) has been held by the New Norcia Benedictine Community for more than 40 years as a legacy of that friendship.

The works and other memorabilia will be exhibited at the New Norcia Museum from July 21 to October 23.

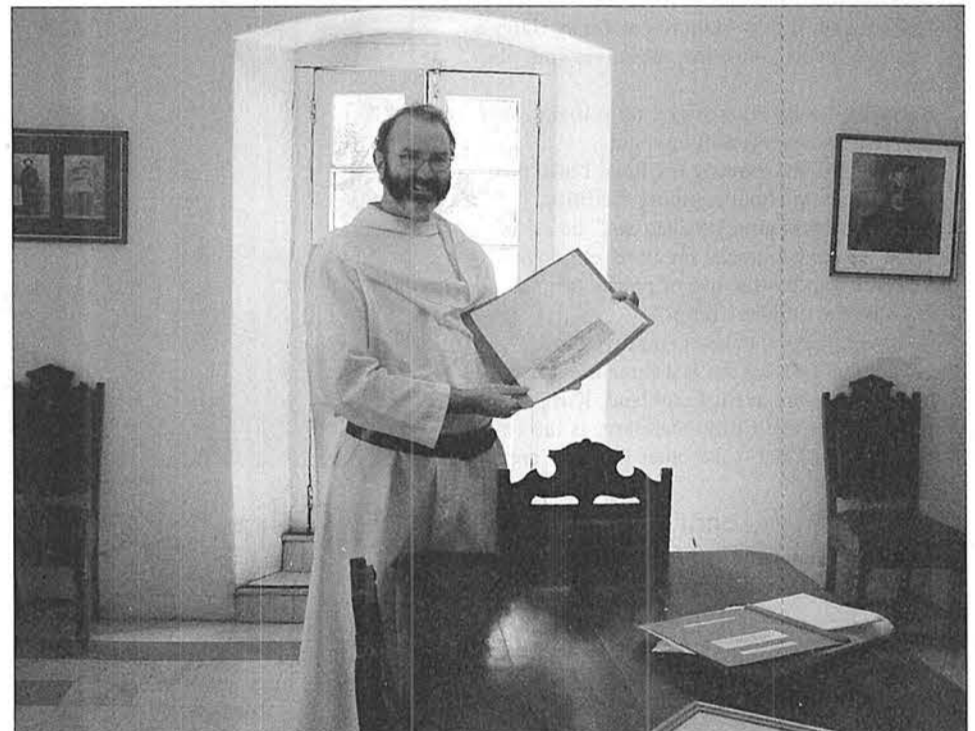
The display will cover several aspects of Gardner's life—as a man, a scientist, a conservationist and an artist—to rekindle interest in a person described as being one of the most influential botanical figures of Western Australia.

Gardner roamed the State for 50 years using his photographic memory and an astonishing ability to identify plants on the spot to capture and name our plants.

With the aid of his friend, Father William Gimenez, from the New Norcia Benedictine Community, Gardner became fluent in Latin—the language of botany—while Father Gimenez took a leaf from Gardner's book and collected plants for a herbarium at the Monastery.

The friendship spanned four decades from the time of Gardner's appointment as Government Botanist and Curator of the WA Herbarium in 1929 at the age of 33.

Gardner left his botanical estate to the New Norcia community to honour his friend Father



Dom Chris at the New Norcia Monastery with some of Gardner's work. Photo by Sue McKenna.

Gimenez, including magnificent colour paintings and drawings of some of Western Australia's most spectacular and striking plants.

Dom Chris Power from the New Norcia Benedictine Community said Gardner planned to retire to New Norcia and live with the community but died while working.

Gardner set aside five extensive flora reserves at Mount Lesueur National Park, the

Lower Murchison River, Lake Cronin Reserve, the Gairdner River to Hamersley River and Barren Ranges (now the Fitzgerald River Biosphere Reserve), and Cape Arid-Israelite Bay. Mount Lesueur was one of his favourite haunts with Gardner making 10 working trips to the area, collecting 155 specimens.

Dom Chris said after 40 years it was time for the public to appreciate the art of one of the State's most influential and creative botanists.

Staff changes . . . Staff changes . . . Staff changes . . . Staff changes . . .

Contracts

Sophie Mollier, covenanting co-ordinator, Wildlife Conservation Branch, Kensington; Jason Kickett, Landcare field officer, Parks, Recreation, Planning and Tourism section, Fremantle; Neil Moncrieff, landscape architect, Planning and Visitor Services; David Mickle, technical officer, Forest and Tree Crops, Dwellingup; Nathan Greenhill, assistant landscape architect, Parks, Recreation, Planning and Tourism Branch; Ben Carr, senior environmental officer, Wildlife Branch, Kensington; Simon Kilbane, landscape architect, Parks, Recreation, Planning and Tourism

Branch; Jacinta Overman, planning officer, Regional Parks, Fremantle.

Resignations

Karen Bettink, conservation officer, Merredin District; Lucy Sheehy, reserves officer, Parks, Policy and Tourism.

Contract ceased

Glenn Batty, farm forestry officer, Farm Forestry Unit, Busselton.

Promotion

Alan Sands, Regional Manager, Regional Services, Kensington; Marg Buckland, volunteer co-ordinator, Parks, Policy and Tourism.

Permanent appointment

Peter Hill, consultant, organisational learning programs, People Services; Alan Kietzmann, conservation officer, Wheatbelt Region, Katanning; Liz Moore, senior project officer, Eco Education, Strategic Development and Corporate Affairs.

Temporary deployment

Christine Pinkerton, trails and recreation project officer, Parks and Visitor Services.

Temporary transfer

Graham Gordon, ecologist, Bushcare co-ordinator, Wildlife Branch, Woodvale.