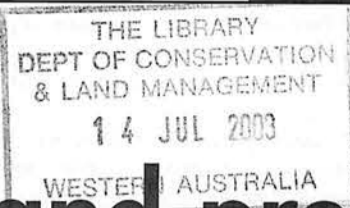


JUNE 2003



# Conservation News

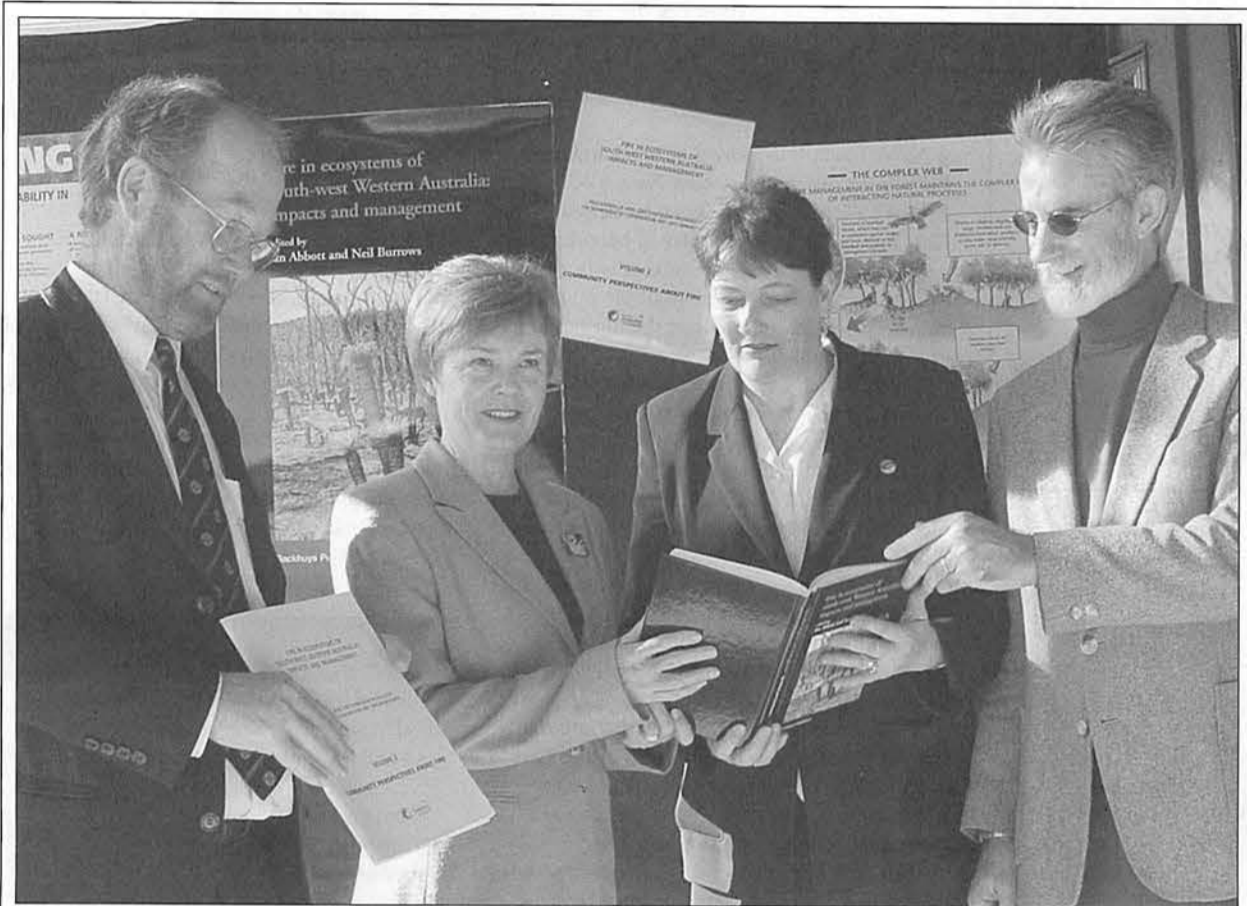


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JUNE 2003

## New research on fire and predators

by Tracy Peacock



From left: Acting Executive Director Keiran McNamara, Environment and Heritage Minister Judy Edwards, Personal Assistant to the Director of Science Glenda Lindsey and the Department's Science Advisor and Principal Research Scientist Ian Abbott at the launch. Photo by John Hunter.

**A MAJOR new research program focusing on feral predators and changing fire regimes has started in the Department's Goldfields region.**

The recently acquired 243,000 hectare Lorna Glen station, north east of Wiluna, will be the main focus of the study.

The Department's Director of Science, Dr Neil Burrows, said there had already been an alarming loss of native animals in WA's arid regions and rangelands.

"For example, about 33 per cent of all native mammal species, and 90 per cent of medium-size native mammals have become either extinct or are suffering massive contractions in their ranges," he said.

The cause of this degradation includes introduced predators such as the European fox and cat.

"Cats, as predators, are the number one problem in the arid areas," the Department's Goldfields Regional Manager Ian Kealley said.

Ian said work on the research program had already started with tracks, pit traps and other infrastructure being put in place during May.

"It's been a major focus for our staff with several trips to the area this month," he said.

"We've done the first lot of pre-baiting fauna monitoring and cat and fox number monitoring.

"The intention is to do the first cat baiting in July and then 12 months of post-bait monitoring."

The Department has been liaising with and involving the Wiluna Aboriginal community on the research program.

"Their knowledge of the bush and of traditional land management practices, especially in relation to fire, will be critical to the overall outcomes of the project," said Neil.

The feral cat baiting program at Lorna Glen follows trials in the Gibson Desert last year.

The new research program and trials will be run in conjunction with an on-going biological survey, reserve management work and operational activities undertaken by the Department's Goldfields Region on Lorna Glen and the neighbouring 321,000 hectare Earraheedy Station that also is managed by the Department.

The research is being carried out by staff from the Department's Science Division, Goldfields Region and Fire Management Services in conjunction with students from local universities, volunteers and Professor Thomas Bragg, a fire and plant ecologist from the University of Nebraska, United States.

It will build on previous Departmental work over the past decade in the Great Victoria Desert, the Gibson Desert and the Great Sandy Desert.

Lorna Glen and Earraheedy are among a number of former pastoral leases the Department is now managing for conservation values. The leases have been bought through the Gascoyne Murchison Strategy, funded by the State Government and the Commonwealth's National Reserve System Program under the Natural Heritage Trust.

See stories on page 3 about Department's work in rangelands

## Fire symposium papers released

**THE proceedings of a major symposium that focussed on the impact of fire on south-west ecosystems are now available.**

The two-volume set includes scientific papers that have been peer reviewed under internationally accepted principles and presentations by community representatives and others involved in fire management.

Volume 1 deals with the antiquity of fire, Aboriginal fire regimes, fire behaviour, soils, plants, fungi, invertebrates, birds, frogs, reptiles and mammals. Volume 2 includes papers on fire law, regional planning, community safety, human health and community perceptions.

The symposium, held in Perth last year, was sponsored by the Department.

The proceedings of the symposium as well as the report of the Department's internal review of fire management in the south-west carried out by Pilbara Regional Manager Chris Muller will be key documents in contributing to informed community discussion on fire policies and management.

At the launch of the proceedings, Environment and Heritage Minister Dr Judy Edwards said getting a broad consensus on fire and its management was critical if the community was to learn to live with fire.

Volume 1 of the proceedings consists of nearly 500 pages of scientific papers and can be purchased from Glenda Lindsey (glendal@calm.wa.gov.au). Volume 2, consisting of 85 pages, can be downloaded from the Department's website, [www.naturebase.net](http://www.naturebase.net).

## Department gives \$50,000 to community groups

**COMMUNITY groups undertaking conservation work in regional parks celebrated Arbor Day by sharing \$50,000 in grants from the Department.**

The grants were awarded to 20 local community groups that had restored and rehabilitated natural biodiversity.

Acting Executive Director Keiran McNamara said the grants would assist the groups to continue their environmental efforts as well as encouraging further public awareness and appreciation for nature conservation at a local level.

He said the regional parks grant scheme was part of the Department's objective of forging strong partnerships with the community to conserve the State's natural biodiversity.

The grants were awarded for works such as on ground weed control and revegetation projects, equipment and administration support, as well as projects increasing public awareness of the regional parks through different media such as information brochures, web cameras linked to websites and school study tours of the regional parks.

The grants were awarded to:

- Coogee Primary School - \$2390 to create a vegetation corridor between Beeliar and Woodman Point Regional Parks and prepare a study tour of Beeliar Regional Park
- Friends of Cockburn Wetlands Education Centre - \$1050 for a survey of birdlife
- Friends of North Lake - \$1603 for rehabilitation works around North Lake

- Friends of Yangebup Wetlands - \$1500 to remove large woody weeds from Yangebup Lake
- Wetlands Conservation Society Inc - \$4250 to revegetate the understorey at South Lake Canning River Regional Park
- Bannister Creek Catchment Group - \$3877 to restore the Adenia Road footbridge
- Canning River Regional Park Volunteers Inc - \$4076 for works associated with the Urban Forest Billabong Green Link and for administrative support
- Wilson Wetlands Action Group - \$3048 for administrative support
- Bungendore Park Management Committee - \$800 for weed control in an area next to Bungendore Park

continued page 3



Environment and Heritage Minister Judy Edwards plants a tuart tree to celebrate Arbor Day at Yellagonga Regional Park.

# Working Together

Last month's edition of *Conservation News* reported on the 2003-04 allocation of \$121 million to the Department as part of the State Government's budget.

New funds were provided for management of the proposed Jurien Bay Marine Park and for improved management of Ningaloo Marine Park and the adjacent coastal strip. The Department also received funding for its new role in management of fire, weeds and feral animals on unallocated Crown land and unvested reserves outside the metropolitan area and townsites.

As well, the budget included continued funding for new initiatives of recent years, including new national parks under the *Protecting our old-growth forests* policy, aerial firefighting capacity and our role in new vegetation clearing controls.

The Department's Corporate Executive has also been looking at opportunities to reallocate some existing resources to ensure emerging priorities are being addressed. In this way we have been able to fund the Pilbara biological survey; extra nature conservation efforts in the Kimberley in the face of threats from altered fire regimes and grazing by introduced animals; rangelands; threatened flora conservation in the south-west through District staff appointments and support for translocation work in Science Division; indigenous initiatives; the regional herbarium network; improved support for Naturebase and CALMweb; and extra funding to help alleviate cost pressures in several regions.

As well as winning new funds to perform our roles, the Department will need to be as flexible as possible in its use of existing resources, so that we can continue to respond to new challenges and priorities.

**Keiran McNamara,**  
Acting Executive Director



## Mentoring trial staff share their skills

**SKILLED** and experienced workers sharing their life and work skills with less experienced workers is the nexus of a mentoring trial officially launched by the Department this month.

Fifteen staff with experience in fire management will take younger staff members under their wings to offer support and guidance.

One focus for the mentoring program is in the area of fire safety, although mentors will also provide professional and career guidance to the mentees.

"It's part of what staff have done informally and intuitively in the past," Regional Services Director, Alan Walker, said.

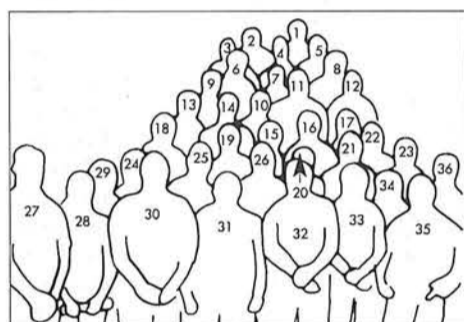
He added he valued the mentoring that he had experienced as a young employee from people such as overseer Wally Dunnet at Pemberton, senior field officers like Jack McAlpine and Ron Kitson, and managers such as Don Spriggins and Roger Underwood.

"Mentoring is something which gives participants great satisfaction, and this trial mentoring program has the full support of the Directors and the Acting Executive Director, Keiran McNamara," he said.

The trial will be evaluated during the next 12 months, with mentors and mentees meeting face to face every six weeks.

Chantal Laval from the People Services Branch is co-ordinating the trial with assistance from John Skillen.

Twelve of the mentees are graduate recruits and three are Aboriginal trainee recruits.



At the mentoring trial launch were: 1. Brad Commins (mentor) 2. Kevin Pollock (mentor) 3. Jamie Ridley (mentor) 4. Greg Mair (mentor) 5. Brian O'Hehir (mentor) 6. Ian Wilson (mentor) 7. Janine Liddelow (mentee) 8. Kris Marducci (mentee) 9. John Carter (mentor) 10. Kate Macgregor (mentee) 11. Dion Winmar (mentee) 12. Kris Pollock (mentee) 13. Murray Mitchell (mentor) 14. Mike Meinema (mentor) 15. Allison Driscoll (mentee) 16. Amelia Mosquera-Pardo 17. Julia Northin (mentee) 18. Roger Armstrong (mentor) 19. Jeff Bennett (mentor) 20. Deanne Pember (mentee) 21. Richard Reid (mentee) 22. Stefan De Haan (mentee) 23. Caitlin Prowse (mentee) 24. Mike Carter (mentor) 25. Mike Fielden (mentor) 26. Roã Simmonds (mentor) 27. Dale Kickett (mentee) 28. Chantal Laval (trial coordinator) 29. John Skillen (trial coordinator) 30. John Byrne (Director Corporate Services) 31. Alan Walker (Director Regional Services) 32. Rob Towers (mentor) 33. Kim Kershaw (mentee) 34. Marie Kahn (mentee) 35. Paul Tholen (mentee) 36. Rick Sneeuwjagt (Manager Fire Management Services)



(Left to right) The Department's Director of Parks and Visitor Services, Jim Sharp, author Anne Ireland, the MLA Member for Swan Hills, Jaye Radisich, the Bibbulmun Track Foundation's Becky Shrimpton, WA Herbarium Group Manager Neville Marchant and author Kim Macey at the launch of the book at the Hills Forest Discovery Centre.

## New wildflower guide

by Paula Langley

A NEW book, *Wildflowers of the Northern Bibbulmun Track and Jarrah Forests - A Walker's Field Guide* has been launched at the Hills Forest Discovery Centre in Mundaring.

The book provides bushwalkers with a practical guide to discovering 300 of the most common wildflowers found along the northern end of the Bibbulmun Track.

Jaye Radisich MLA, Member for Swan Hills, launched the book and commended the authors and WA Herbarium volunteers, Kim Macey and Anne Ireland, for their efforts.

Anne and Kim collected, identified and documented new flora specimens for the Western Australian Herbarium.

Support from the Lotteries Commission of WA and encouragement from the WA Herbarium and the Bibbulmun Track Foundation helped transform this research into the Field Guide.

Group Manager of the WA Herbarium, Dr Neville Marchant, said the book was the first of its kind to be published about the area and would become an invaluable reference for any of the jarrah forests in the South West.

"Not only have these two very clever people made this knowledge available, they have added to the overall appreciation and understanding of the Bibbulmun Track's flora knowledge and inspired new efforts to conserve the environment," Neville said.

Director of Parks and Visitor Services Jim Sharp also acknowledged the great contribution

of the volunteers at the WA Herbarium, the Bibbulmun Track Foundation and other organisations who support the Bibbulmun Track.

"The enthusiasm, expertise and hard work of these volunteers has made the Bibbulmun Track one of Australia's great success stories," Jim said.

The guide retails for \$24 and is available from the Bibbulmun Track Foundation. Online orders are welcome and 'Foundation Friends Members' can obtain the book for the special price of \$20.

### Conservation News June 2003

Published by Department of Conservation and Land Management Strategic Development and Corporate Affairs, Cygnet Hall, (cnr) Mounts Bay Road and Hackett Drive, CRAWLEY, Western Australia 6009

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**Printing:** Scott Print

Printed on 100% recycled paper

## Right on Track

*Right on Track* is a monthly news story feature sponsored by the corporate executive group using stories from around the State that demonstrate our strategic directions and core values. This month's feature looks at the Science Division, focussing on conserving biodiversity, professionalism, value, cooperation and knowledge sharing.

Improving the conservation of wheatbelt remnant vegetation has been a passion for many Departmental staff.

A study aimed at understanding the genetic and ecological viability of plant populations in fragmented landscapes is under way in wandoo woodlands and heathlands at Dongolocking, near Narrogin.

The results will be used to develop remnant vegetation management guidelines to maintain viable plant populations that will be of long term value for conservation.

It is a three year collaborative initiative between the Flora Recovery and Conservation Program within Science Division, CSIRO's Division of Plant Industry, and Land and Water Australia, which has provided significant funding.

Similar studies are being carried out in fragmented grassy woodlands in NSW and eucalypt woodlands in Queensland.

The study had its genesis when Ken Wallace, in his role as Wheatbelt Regional Manager, saw the opportunity to link the growing knowledge of his staff with the national desire to better understand and model plant population viability in vegetation remnants.

Science Program Leader David Coates now heads a team of Departmental scientific staff chosen for their skills and experience - Margaret Byrne (molecular and population genetics), Colin Yates (population ecology), Carole Elliott (Technical Officer) and Chris Gage (PhD student).

The study is based on detailed population, genetic and ecological analyses of three species that occur across the wheatbelt landscape - *Eucalytus wandoo*, *Calothalpmus quadrifidus* and *Eremaea pauciflor*.

It involves lab based, genetic detective work including the use of DNA based microsatellite markers to trace gene flow, on-site analysis of disturbance, connectivity and density; analyses of the seed set/reproductive outputs and studies of pollination and how plants mate with each other.

The results so far indicate that both population size and habitat disturbance affect reproduction and genetic diversity although data will be needed for the next two years to confirm clear trends.

Drought conditions in 2002 hampered the collection of seed and flowering material and indicated the importance of replicating the study over two to three years to take into account annual climate variation.

The science team intends to present interim results at a national workshop on habitat fragmentation to be held in Sydney. Results will also be presented to the 14th International Congress of Genetics to be held in Melbourne later this year.

The study will be completed in 2004 and will greatly assist managers and landholders in developing goals regarding remnant size, and landscape configuration to maximize the regional persistence of plant species.

# Nanga through Nyoongar Eyes

**DID you know that yonga goona is an essential ingredient in an ancient Nyoongar recipe for glue?**

This and many other amazing aspects of Indigenous culture were revealed to Nearer to Nature staff, guides and volunteers during a weekend workshop at Icy Creek Environmental Bush Camp.

Delvene Cornwall, a Nearer to Nature guide, was the inspirational leader of the weekend, and was ably supported by her father Koodah from the Indigenous Heritage Unit, her brother Jerome, and cousin Jade.

After arriving and a healthy lunch at this wonderful venue south of Dwellingup, the fifteen participants introduced themselves to the group using the traditional talking stick. More induction followed with a

by Darren Gillespie

spiritual cleansing of the mind as all the stresses of city life were left behind.

The whole weekend was full of incredible activities that introduced participants to Nyoongar traditions that demonstrate ultimate respect for the environment. Dreamtime stories, bushwalks, dancing, spear throwing and face painting are just some of the ways that Nyoongar values and lifestyles were explained to the group.

Everyone who attended was struck with the richness of Nyoongar culture, and the level of personal relaxation and attachment reached with the Dwellingup environment.

The whole group is keen to pass

on these valuable messages through the future development of Nearer to Nature interpretive activities at Icy Creek, and also by acting on Delvene and Koodah's advice and personally relating the stories and customs we discovered during this special weekend.

By the way, yonga goona is kangaroo poo.

*Back row: Jolene Wallington, Kay Stritzke, Jerome Cornwall, Matt Freeman, Darren Gillespie. Middle Row: May Upe, Delvene Cornwall, Marra Aggar, Rohan Swan, Liz McGuire, Ben Coyne. Front row: Norma Hatchett, Dot Bell, May Carter, Jade Cornwall, Christie Mahoney, Koodah Cornwall, Stef van den Hoek. Photo by Jacqui Purvis.*



## Getting on with the job across WA's rangelands

### Roof cave-in repaired

**MUGGON Station, about 250km north of Mullewa on the western edge of the Murchison shire boundary, is etched in history.**

The Department purchased the station in 1999, but before that Bill and Jenny Mitchell had lived on and managed Muggon since the early 1970s. They are now its caretakers.

February 10 was another day in the station's history with a violent storm tearing across the station and wreaking havoc to anything that stood in its path including the homestead, hanger and tack room.

Damage to the homestead was caused by the strong winds knocking over a large palm tree growing in the front yard.

The palm tree fell through the veranda damaging a large section of the homestead roof.

Our job was to help Jenny Mitchell remove the damaged section of the homestead, cover the open roof cavity with tarpaulins and tidy up all

by Tony Raudino

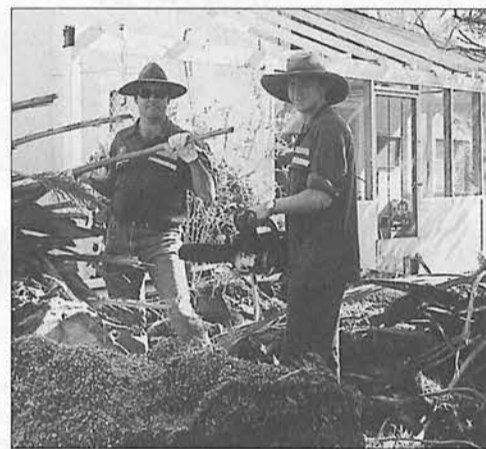
the tin and debris that had been blown around by the storm.

Gregory Scott Kitson, Anthony Desmond and Tony Raudino arrived to help and found Jenny Mitchell, who was at home when the tree came through the house, had the whole situation under control and was as cool as a cucumber about the fact that her home was missing half the roof!

From the office this job did not sound like it was going to be too much trouble. How wrong we were!

The hot humid conditions were taxing, the mosquitos were biting and the pile of palm fronds on the ground was never ending no matter how many ute loads were removed!

We soon learnt it is all about respect, and teamwork! After two days of solid work we were



*Nature Conservation Regional leader Anthony 'Noddy' Desmond (left) and pastoral reserves officer Tony Raudino at Muggon.*

able to look back and see what we had achieved. Our thanks go to Jenny Mitchell and also Sandy McTaggart, who used his front end loader to remove the fallen palm tree.

## Lake Mason Station Renovation

**A HOMESTEAD at former sheep station 'Lake Mason' received a much-needed makeover on the Easter weekend by volunteers and Department staff.**

Now de-stocked and managed by the Department, the sheep station—formerly the Palace Hotel, 50 kilometres north of Sandstone—was purchased in July 2000 as part of the State Government's commitment to add former pastoral leases to the conservation estate. Extensive conservation work has been carried out on the station, but the homestead was in a dire state.

Not disheartened by the sight of the building (that seemed more

worthy of a bulldozer than a makeover), the volunteer force—made up by members of the Mitsubishi 4WD Club of WA, the VKS737 Radio Network group, WA 4WD Association and Department staffers Bev Gardiner and Warwick Roe got to work on Good Friday.

With a dead kangaroo in one of the rooms and filthy walls and floors in the others, at times the task seemed enormous. But, determined to provide facilities to visitors to the station, the group pushed on.

The satisfaction of admiring the transformation of a dilapidated,

smelly, homestead into one that looked as if someone could move straight into, made all their efforts seem worth while.

Roofing was repaired, floors were restumped, steps were built, the hot water system and generator were made operational and the homestead was thoroughly cleaned inside and out.

The work of 150 members of the VKS737 Radio Network and the WA 4WD Association (under the supervision of Stewart Gillam from the VKS737 Radio Network and Michael Code from the WA 4WD Association) and an estimated 500 volunteer hours made

this transformation possible.

Exhausted members celebrated their efforts, and a great weekend, at a BBQ dinner on Saturday night, provided by the Gidgee Mine and the Department.

The Goldfields Region is working on a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the WA 4WD Association to develop a long-term strategy for future management of the homestead, which is well positioned for overnight stays by travellers en route to the Canning Stock Route and Gunbarrel Highway or as a centre for activities in the Sandstone area.

## Department gives \$50,000 to community groups

from page 1

- Churchmans Bushland Association – \$150 for information sheets and signage to raise public awareness of local flora
- Friends of Bellevue Wetlands – \$1540 for restoration and rehabilitation of the Bellevue Block
- Friends of Spring Road Block – \$920 weed control
- Friends of Piesse Brook Inc – \$2800 for works associated with Schipp Road
- Friends of Crumpet Creek – \$2030 for rehabilitation projects
- Herdsman Lake
- WA Gould League Inc – \$5000 towards installing a web camera at the Herdsman Lake Wildlife Centre
- Naragebup Rockingham Environment Centre Inc – \$4645 for a Preserving the Future project
- Friends of Yellagonga Regional Park Inc – \$5000 for maintaining the Yellagonga rehabilitation site
- Woodvale Waters Landowners Association – \$2500 for rehabilitation around Woodvale Waters
- Yellagonga Catchment Group – \$2820 for ongoing revegetation work around Ariti Avenue

## New colony of Australia's rarest marsupial found

**A NEW colony of Gilbert's potoroos – Australia's rarest marsupial – has been found on the slopes of Mt Gardner in the Two Peoples Bay Nature Reserve east of Albany.**

The Department of Conservation and Land Management and the Albany-based Gilbert's Potoroo Action Group found the colony as part of the survey and monitoring work under the recovery plan for this critically endangered species.

Department scientist, Tony Friend, said the find brought to five the number of known

wild colonies of the species. The potoroo was rediscovered in December 1994 by University of Western Australia zoology students Elizabeth Sinclair and Adrian Wayne who trapped several individuals on Mount Gardner while searching for quokkas. Until then, it had not been recorded for 115 years.

"The new colony comprises one adult male, an adult female with a large pouch young, and a sub-adult male and female," Tony said. The researchers taped transmitters onto the potoroos' tails and the animals have remained in the area where they were captured, about

one kilometre from the nearest known potoroos.

"It is an extremely encouraging discovery as we had earlier captured, but subsequently lost track of three of these animals from other locations on Mt Gardner.

"The fact that they had not died but merely moved from their former home ranges and established a new colony, and that the adult female is breeding, indicates that the Mount Gardner population is in a healthy state.

"When the entire population of a species gets down to around 30 animals – the estimat-

ed number of Gilbert's potoroos at Two Peoples Bay – then the species really is in trouble.

"But the discovery of this new colony at this stage seems to indicate the species is rallying.

"However, we still have a very long way to go before we can have confidence that the species won't become extinct. For example, any wildfire that burnt substantial tracts of the animal's preferred habitat in the heathlands, could be a disaster. We urgently need to establish another population elsewhere."

## New Grievance Contact Officers

TWELVE new Grievance Contact Officers have joined the Department's network.

The new officers took part in a two-day training course run by the Equal Opportunity Commission and the Department.

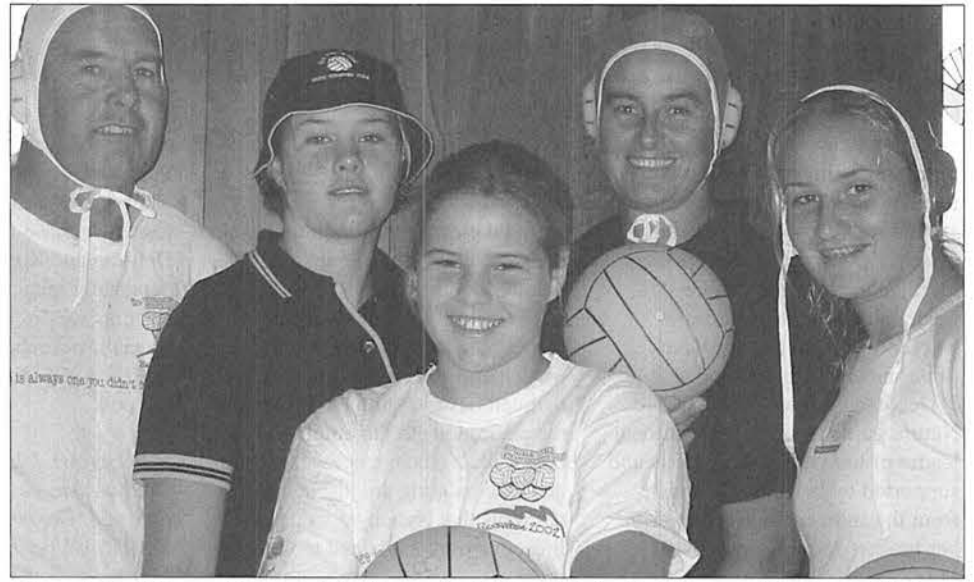
They received information about employee equal opportunity legislation and the Department's own *Good Working Relations* policy.

The Department's Policy and Diversity Consultant, Tracey Rankin, said the new grievance officers would expand the program, which began in March last year.

Tracey said they were there to help with cases of discrimination, harassment, victimisation or bullying and to provide information and support.

Information about the *Good Working Relations* policy is available on CALMweb <http://calmweb.calm.wa.gov.au/drb/csd/hrb/gwro/index.html>.

Pictured at the training course (below) were the new Grievance Contact Officers (left to right) John Rooney (Manjimup), Tania Donovan (Dwellingup), Tony Dehnel (Wanneroo), Chantal Laval (Kensington), Steve Dutton (Yalgorup National Park), Maurice Agale (Kensington), Judy Napier (Karratha), Richard Moore (Busselton), Kim Hanafee (Kensington), David Tiggerdine (Observatory, Bicton), June Anderson (Kalgoorlie) and Sylvia Leighton (Albany) with the Department's Policy and Diversity Consultant, Tracey Rankin (Kensington). Photo by Rhianna Mooney.



Tammie Reid (second from right) with her family from left, husband Ian and daughters Chelsea, Rosie and Alice.

## Plunge into water polo makes splash

by Tracy Peacock

**WHEN** Tammie Reid first plunged into water polo 10 years ago, little did she know the impact it would have on her family.

Her quest for fun and fitness has since resulted in her family – daughters Chelsea (17), Alice (15) and Rosie (12) and husband Ian Rotheram – all playing water polo.

Tammie, a Strategic Development and Corporate Affairs Senior Project Officer with the Department, now clocks up some six hours a week in the pool playing her chosen sport.

She plays water polo with her daughters in

Bunbury, Busselton and metropolitan competitions, and with Alice and Chelsea recently gained selection in the state country women's water polo team.

Last month they travelled to Darwin and were silver medallists in a national water polo competition.

Chelsea and Alice also play in Ian's team in a men's competition in Bunbury.

Forty-four-year-old Tammie believes there are many benefits to playing sport, particularly as a family in terms of teamwork, respect and communication.

"It's good to share time together and you support each other and have a lot of fun," she said.

"You get to work together as equals and see each other in a different light.

"Being involved in each other's lives has always been an important part of how our family works and playing a sport with my daughters at a state level is a bit of a dream for me."

## Staff changes . . . Staff changes . . . Staff changes . . . Staff changes . . .

### Promotion

Phil Smeeton, Yanchep National Park Manager, Regional Services, Yanchep National Park; Bruce Bone, Wheatbelt Regional Manager, Regional Services, Narrogin; Paul Brown, District Manager, Regional Services, Swan Coastal District.

### Contract

Alan Kendrick, Marine and Coastal Officer, Bunbury Regional Headquarters; Susan Walker, Seasonal Ranger, Geikie Gorge National Park, West Kimberley Region; Nathan Eaton, Research Officer, Corporate Services, GIS Section; Josie Dean, Project Officer, Regional Services, Exmouth District; Maurice Agale, Assistant Employee Relations Officer, Corporate Services, People Services.

### Permanent

Paul Harrison, Survey and Mapping Officer, Forest Management Branch; Riki Fazzalri, Clerical Officer, Regional Services, Swan Coastal District; Grant Garside, Technical

Officer, Regional Services, Communications; Verna Tunsell, Officer, Science Division, Manjimup; Judith Davidson, Officer, Nature Conservation Division, Marine Conservation; Cathy Foster, Publications and Subscriptions Cashier, Strategic Development and Corporate Affairs; Jasmin Goddard, Publications and Subscriptions Cashier, Strategic Development and Corporate Affairs; Stephen Owen, Senior Ranger, Cape Range Exmouth; Genevera Kidd, Officer, Research Herbarium; Ross (John) Mack, Reserves Officer (Marine) Denham District Officer, Shark Bay.

### Reclassification

Sue Adams, Information Analyst, Corporate Services, Kensington.

### Temporary transfer

Gordon Graham, Policy Advisor, Regional Services, Kununurra to Nature Conservation, Crawley.

### Transfer

Ken Wallace, Manager, Regional Services,

Wheatbelt Region to Nature Conservation, Natural Resources Branch.

### Redundancy

Bruce Bond, Ranger Grade 2, Regional Services, Coral Bay; Terry Bloomer, Mobile National Park Ranger, Regional Services, Albany.

### Secondment

Pam Burgoyne, Records Management Officer, Corporate Services, Corporate Information to Disability Services Commission.

### Resignation

Shannon Hampton, Reserves Officer, Shark Bay District.

### Contract ceased

Silvana Abbonizio, Publications and Subscriptions Cashier, Strategic Development and Corporate Affairs; Russell Venn, Reserves Officer, Narrogin District; Gordon Herbert, Cartographic Officer, GIS Section; Craig Richards, Infrastructure and Services Manager, Information Services Section.

## Sad loss of Merv Smith

**STAFF** in the Forest Products Commission and the Department of Conservation and Land Management were saddened to learn of the sudden death of Merv Smith while holidaying in Queensland in May.

Merv worked for 35 years in the forests of WA, commencing with the Forests Department in 1968, at CALM from 1985–2000, and finally with the FPC. A Northcliffe boy, he began his career as an 18 year-old gaining a position as Technical Assistant at the Working Plans Office Manjimup in April, 1968. Merv became a proficient forest assessor carrying out a regional level inventory of the jarrah and karri forests. The results of this inventory were used as a basis of "General Working Plans" and for the allocation of timber resources. Merv transferred to Harvey in 1970 and then to Kelmscott in 1978.

His work continued to revolve around inventories and the mapping of forest condition and health. His outstanding work ethic and leadership saw him progress to Senior Forester in 1989. He played a leading role in the shift to improved office facilities in Kensington in 1999. With the creation of the



FPC in 2000 Merv transferred as Senior Forester Planning into the Native Forest Division and was based at its Rivervale office. He was the ideal person as the interface between the FPC operations staff in the Northern jarrah forest and the planners and record keepers at his old branch in CALM. His skills and knowledge in forest

mapping were appreciated by many including the conservation movement. He played a lead role in the acquisition of map plotters in which he had special pride. During the summer fire seasons Merv was a willing and strong contributor, supporting the organisation in wild fire suppression emergencies.

Work colleagues remember with respect and fondness Merv's many fine qualities, including his enthusiasm and positive approach to his work, and his leadership and sense of humour. His long stride, helpful nature and his outstanding approach to "getting on with the job" remain in the memories of his workmates. He made an outstanding contribution to the measurement of WA's south-west forests, of particular value in the resource planning of the timber industry. Merv helped in the development of many young staff and was a good member of the Forest Field Officer Association throughout his long career.

Outside the workplace Merv was a caring family man, giving much of his time to his church and the community. Merv is survived by his wife Margaret and three daughters.

## Conservation briefs

### No risk at Dwellingup

Sampling of soil and ground water on the outskirts of Dwellingup has revealed there is no risk to water supplies, community health or environmental values in the area that was used as disposal pits for chemical containers buried in State forest 30 years ago.

The results of sampling from a series of bores drilled in and around the area, where containers were buried, had shown that the levels of residual contamination in the soil and ground water were well below Australian and international health standards.

### Walpole Wilderness Area

An issues paper has been released for the proposed Walpole Wilderness Area.

The creation of the Walpole Wilderness Area will cover more than 360,000ha and comprises four proposed new national parks and three existing national parks.

The paper was released following consultation with the Walpole Wilderness Area Community Advisory Committee.

The issues paper can be found on the Department's website.

### Camp kitchen a hit with campers

Visitors to the Conto campsite—20 kilometres south of Margaret River—are enjoying the use of a new camp kitchen.

The new facility features a free, sheltered gas barbeque designed to cater for the increased numbers of visitors to the site and reduce the amount of firewood used at the campsite for cooking.

The campsite has recently undergone other improvements including the construction of a ranger's house, sealed access from Caves Rd and the commencement of a second camp kitchen.