



Conservation News



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SEPTEMBER 2005

Western Shield gets \$4 million boost

CALM will provide an extra \$4 million to its *Western Shield* program, bringing the total program investment to \$12 million during the next four years.

News of the increased funding came at the official launch of *A Review of the Western Shield Program*, a report by a panel of independent scientists which said *Western Shield* was at the leading edge of wildlife conservation.

The eminent scientists – Hugh Possingham, Professor of Zoology and Mathematics at The University of Queensland; Peter Jarman, Emeritus Professor at the Department of Ecosystem Management at The University of New England; and Allan Kearns, Deputy Chief of CSIRO's Sustainable Ecosystems – also said *Western Shield's* success was attributable to CALM's dedicated and competent staff.

CALM's Executive Director, Keiran McNamara, said *Western Shield* had a strong scientific basis and key components of monitoring, community education and public relations.

"The program was a product of former CALM Executive Director Syd Shea's boldness and vision," he said.

"CALM, along with many partners, has worked to make it a success and it's a world-class program."

Western Shield includes a comprehensive captive breeding program, which involves the work of CALM, Perth Zoo and Kanyana Rehabilitation Centre staff in five breeding facilities.

by Rhianna Mooney

The program has been further strengthened with generous sponsorship from Alcoa World Alumina Australia, Cable Sands WA Pty Ltd, Iluka Resources Ltd, the TiWest Joint Venture, the Australian Bush Heritage Fund and the Wind over Water Foundation.

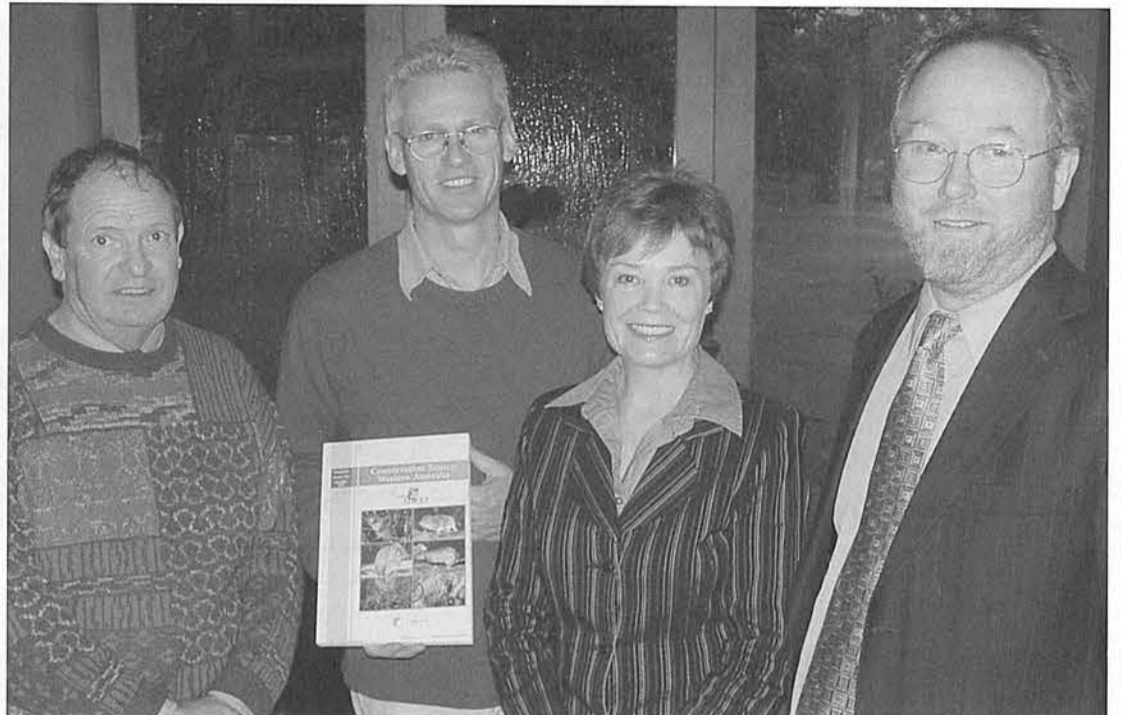
The program's success also relies on the cooperation and support of local communities, private landowners and Land Conservation District Committee members who assist by laying baits for foxes on their own land where it is adjacent to conservation reserves and State forest.

Keiran said the peer review of *Western Shield*, conducted by independent assessors, and the self-review that accompanied it, was an opportunity to consider improvements to the program and implement recommendations.

TiWest Environmental Manager, Jim Tyler, who spoke at the launch said his organisation had supported *Western Shield* for five years and he looked forward to its continuing involvement.

"*Western Shield* gives us an opportunity to contribute to a program with wide environmental benefits," Jim said.

"And, we believe, anything we can do to rid the country of foxes is money well spent!"



Left to right: CALM Principal Research Scientist Tony Start and Senior Zoologist Peter Orell, editors of *A Review of the Western Shield Program*, with Environment Minister Dr Judy Edwards and CALM's Executive Director Keiran McNamara at the launch last month. Photo – Rhianna Mooney

WESTERN Shield is a wildlife recovery program that aims to conserve native animals by controlling introduced predators such as the European fox and feral cat.

Western Shield is the biggest example of an adaptive management program for the conservation of biodiversity at an operational scale in Australia.

In 2004-2005 more than 3.7 million ha of land were aerially and hand-baited with 1080 baits to

control foxes and cats, and preserve native wildlife.

The increase in funding brings CALM's total commitment to the native fauna conservation program to \$12 million for the next four years. This includes an additional \$750,000 a year for research programs and \$325,000 a year to cover rising costs associated with baits and the use of aircraft. A full-time *Western Shield* coordinator also will be appointed.



Working on the Bride Cave project, in descending height, were Bernie Jones, Rob Klok, Tracey Robins and Mal Strange.

Diverse recreation projects in South West

CALM's South West Region has reported a busy 12 months with \$2 million worth of parks and visitor services projects under way.

The Department's South West Regional Construction Supervisor, Doug Hovell, said the variety of jobs required problem solving and new ways of working for the Parks and Visitor Services (PVS) crews.

The projects have included a lookout at Rabbit Hill, in the Leeuwin-Naturaliste National Park, new toilet facilities at Buffalo Beach in Leschenault Conservation Park, an abseiling platform at Brides Cave in Boranup forest and Honeymoon Pool's decking upgrade in Wellington National Park.

"A lot of the projects we've undertaken over the past 12 months have been complex and have involved stabilising steep slopes, river banks and cave edges," Doug said.

"All were in difficult and unforgiving sites where drainage and construction issues were extremely important.

"And a lot were in high visitation areas where we needed to be as quick as possible in our construction phase, with the aim of getting in and out fast but at the same time doing a high quality job."

Doug paid tribute to the outstanding work undertaken by the local crews.

"The diversity of these tasks has stretched and challenged our competencies and project management skills," he said.

"Those involved have met all these challenges by working together. It's this 'can do' attitude that seems to be flowing through the projects. They have adhered to high standards for the finished work and demonstrated timely project management.

"I'd also like to acknowledge the important and less glamorous maintenance work done by Jim Baggetta, Julie Cox, Ben Crawford and Ed MacIntyre on the Wellington District recreation site toilet upgrade program.

"Steve Keen and Rob Hooper Hall have also done a great job at Blackwood, lining many existing structures and improving the ablution facilities."

The following provides a snapshot of the works undertaken in the South West Region during the past 12 months.

- **Brides Cave abseiling platform:** Mal Strange and Bernie Jones, of the Margaret River Work Centre, Blackwood District, have installed a 12 m, segmented steel structure designed to protect and stabilise the abseiling start point into this cave. Much of their work entailed dangling at the end of ropes while installing steel sub-columns and fixings into limestone rock.

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Working on the Rabbit Hill lookout were (from left) Lisa Archer, Anthony Reynolds, Neil Taylor, Graeme White, Bernie Jones and Julian Harrison. Photo – Doug Hovell

Working Together

September saw two notable events in the provision of high quality visitor services and facilities in two of our best known national parks, at opposite ends of the State. They were the opening by the Minister for the Environment, Dr Judy Edwards, of the Bungle Bungle Wilderness Camp at Purnululu National Park, and the redeveloped Bluff Knoll visitor facilities in the Stirling Range National Park.

Between them the two projects exemplified close collaboration with local Aboriginal groups, the tourism industry and local communities, and a high standard of construction and landscaping. All staff involved are to be congratulated on both projects, which typify our commitment to a world-class parks system in terms of both conserving biodiversity and encouraging visitors to enjoy and appreciate natural areas.

The lead article in this Conservation News also marks a milestone event. The Western Shield review brings together the independent review panel's assessment together with a series of papers covering the science, management, operations, monitoring, education and public information aspects of the program. As well as the review publication providing a valuable resource and hopefully inspiration for wildlife conservationists everywhere, the review has helped us focus on research questions that have arisen from the uneven results of Western Shield in some areas. The injection of an additional \$3 million over four years, to be spent in partnership with the Cooperative Research Centre for Invasive Animals and others, to research these questions demonstrates our commitment to continue and expand Western Shield as a world-class wildlife recovery program.

Keiran McNamara, Executive Director



Future plans being set

REGIONAL workshops to create three-year nature conservation plans began in August in the South West, Warren, Swan and Goldfields regions.

By November, nine draft regional plans will have been completed. These will help inform statewide priorities for biodiversity conservation.

CALM's A/Assistant Director of Nature

Conservation, Keith Claymore, said the final plans would outline the biodiversity conservation services that need to be delivered by the Department.

"They will describe what CALM is trying to achieve at a regional scale over the next three years, and outline priorities for both marine and terrestrial conservation for the Divisions of Science, Regional Services and Nature Conservation," he said.



The writing team at the Warren Region workshop was (from left) David Coates, Senior Principal Research Scientist; Peter Keppel, Warren Regional Manager; Kaylene Bain, Frankland District Nature Conservation Coordinator; Ian Wilson, Donnelly District Nature Conservation Coordinator; Neil Burrows, Director of Science; Kevin Vear, Dieback Coordinator; Keith Claymore, A/Assistant Director Nature Conservation; and Roger Hearn, Regional Ecologist.

Healthy Parks Healthy People

Did you know?

The foundation of CALM's Healthy Parks, Healthy People initiative is based on international evidence that shows a strong link between contact with nature and human health. This month's column looks at these links. Further references and evidence can be found on www.naturebase.net

Humans have an innate requirement for nature?

Almost 20 years ago, the biophilia hypothesis was developed which recognised that intimately knowing the natural world, especially knowledge of plants and animals, provided humans with an evolutionary advantage and significantly contributed to survival. Humans have a love or need of nature which is an inherent characteristic of human evolutionary heritage. We continue to rely on the natural world physically, emotionally, spiritually and intellectually. In fact, biophilia and the link between nature and human health forms the basis of the Healthy Parks, Healthy People initiative.

Pets can improve health?

Pet ownership has grown with increasing urbanisation in Western societies. In Australia, about 60 per cent of households own a pet, such as a dog, cat or bird. Pet owners have lower blood pressure and cholesterol, lower stress levels and make fewer visits to the doctor than people without pets. In addition, pet owners have better mental health and overall well-being than non-pet owners. Dog owners (but interestingly not cat owners!) are six times more likely to survive the year following a heart attack than those without a dog. In addition, dog ownership may be a significant factor in motivating people to visit our regional parks where they can interact with their pet, get some physical activity and socialise with others, thereby improving mental, physical and social health.

Caring program a great success

by Lisa Maddocks

ABOUT 1200 visitors took part in this year's Caring for Country Program at Karijini National Park.

The program, held during the July school holidays, incorporated 15 interpretive activities, geared for all ages.

The nature-based activities covered a broad spectrum of interests and included bird walks, campfire yarns, photography sessions,

botanical walks, gorge walks, slide shows, children's art activities and wildlife displays.

The campfire yarns were extremely popular with up to 140 people attending each night.

"It was a huge success and we would like

to extend the program longer than the two week school holiday period," said Karijini National Park Senior Ranger, Paul Udinga.

The extension of the campfire yarn theme from previous years was Paul's idea.

"My vision came from seeing the need to advertise the fantastic things CALM staff are doing. This was an opportunity to get the 'we at CALM are passionate about managing the environment for all to enjoy and share' message out into the general public."

WA Herbarium Program Leader, Dr Neville Marchant, was one of the many contributors to this year's program.

It was Neville's first visit to Karijini. He was amazed when he saw first hand the relationship between the geology and the floral diversity in the park. This inspired his presentation at the campfire yarns. His willingness to participate and enthusiasm played a key role in the program's success.

Visitor feedback highlighted their enjoyment and appreciation of the presentations by Neville and other speakers.

Other contributors to the program included local volunteers, customs and park staff and topics included regional and CALM issues.



WA Herbarium Program Leader, Dr Neville Marchant, shares his love of plants with Karijini visitors.

from page 1

- **Rabbit Hill lookout:** Julian Harrison and Tom Powell worked within a tight time frame (including time-out for assisting at a whale stranding) to remove the old lookout and replace it with an eight by four metre timber deck, prefabricated at the CALM workshop. Rabbit Hill is a high visitation area in the Leeuwin-Naturaliste National Park and the aim was to inconvenience visitors as little as possible. The job took just five working days.
- **Buffalo Beach toilet block:** Brian Taylor, Julie Cox and Kevin Graham were proud of the design and level of finish of this curved roof structure, designed to blend in with the coastal environment. Most of the structure was built at the Leschenault compound and installed in a short period of time on site. Unfortunately, vandals burnt this building and it is being rebuilt to the same specifications.
- **Honeymoon Pool decking:** This complex project involves a sub-floor steel structure made by a contractor with timber joists being added by the CALM team. Modules of pre-oiled decking will then be installed. The finished deck will be 45 metres long. Ross Sturges, Chris Roberts, Glen Jones, Tony Best, Kelly Bennet, Chris Holtzhauser, Ben Crawford and Trevor Dye are focused on seeing this installation through, including stabilising the river banks and minimising site compaction.
- **Sue's Bridge amenity and camp kitchen:** The Margaret River Work Centre recreation crew – Len Jarvis, Mal Strange and Bernie Jones have been working on a number of projects at this site including a split-level, gas-fired camp kitchen, toilet blocks and rainwater storage.
- **Barrabup Pool road works and camping ground:** Finishing the gravel and road components of the campground toilet block and overflow carpark over winter has been

the aim of Geoff Wilson, Bill Stallard and Paul Brown. They have managed this and are now adding the finishing touches.

- **Chapman Pool, Blackwood views:** This new project has just started and requires a multitude of skills from Len Jarvis and Graeme White such as concreting, bricking, and working in steel, timber and plastic.

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Twenty years ago this month... September 1985



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Crawley protest

DIEBACK PROTECTION PLAN FOR SOUTH COAST

By KEITH LOW

A project team is working on a dieback protection plan for CALM land in the South Coast Region.

The Region includes a number of National Parks and Nature Reserves which are of great value for their spectacular scenery, recreation opportunity, and wildlife habitat, but perhaps most of all because they harbour one of the richest, and most diverse floral communities in Australia.

The importance of these communities is heightened by the fact that many of the species are endemic to the Region, or even to very specific areas within a single Park.

Dieback, caused by the fungus *Phytophthora cinnamomi*, could have a devastating effect on these plants and, in turn, each of the other values of the Region.

The disease has already demonstrated that it affects some of the largest and most important plant families in the Region.

Dieback occurs to a varying extent in all the most popular Parks and Reserves in the Region, so a strategy to minimise the spread and impact of the disease has been given priority by CALM.

A benefit of the amalgamation is that the project team is able to draw on the whole range of expertise necessary to tackle the problem, which previously was not available within any one of the constituent Departments.

The team consists of Frank Batini, Environmental Protection (Convenor); John Watson, South Coast Region; Kevin Goss, Information;

Joanna Tippett, Research; Greg Keighery, Research; Sue Moore, Planning; and Keith Low, Environmental Protection.

To date the team has assigned responsibilities and is accumulating the data bank required for formulation of the plan.

Visits to the area and discussions with Ranger staff have been useful.

It is intended that by the end of the year, an overall regional dieback protection plan outlining broad management strategies and explaining policy decisions, will be produced.

By the same target date a number of specific protection plans, including resource information and detailed management strategies, are to be produced for some Parks and Reserves in the Region.

The priority classification for this purpose, based on various criteria, is close to completion.

The dieback protection plan is seen as an interim document, much of which would be suitable for inclusion in a regional management plan at a later date.

Nature Reserve survey

ON the weekend of September 7 and 8, 1985, Jackie Brown and Sue Moore from Planning and Jeni Alford, Louise Boscacci, Judith Brown and Alan Burbridge from Wildlife Research combined forces with the WA Naturalists' Club (led by Otto Mueller) to survey the Clackline Nature Reserve.

This nature reserve, with an area of 460ha, lies just to the east of Bakers Hill on the Great Eastern Highway.

It is geologically and floristically very interesting, being on the rugged boundary between the Darling Range and Avon Valley.

It is also the only nature reserve on which the rare Shy Spider Orchid *Caladenia triangularis* has been recorded.

The two days revealed a wealth of fauna, with four snake, three legless lizard, five skink, four gecko, one dragon and one monitor species of reptile being recorded.

Five frog species were also noted.

Grey kangaroos and echidnas were common. Forty-two species of birds were observed, including two nocturnal species, the Boobook Owl and Tawny Frogmouth.

This information will provide good baseline data for the management plan for nature reserves in the Shires of York and Northam.

Clackline is one of the six nature reserves in this area.

—SUE MOORE



Conservation Council members protested outside CALM's Crawley office on Friday, September 13. The protest was against "a proposal to mine for gold in the Hamersley Range National Park..." A meeting of the National Parks and Nature Conservation Authority was being held at Crawley at the time.

Turtle haven off Dampier

By KEITH MORRIS

The use of beaches in the Dampier Archipelago by marine turtles for nesting was one of the main reasons for these islands becoming Nature Reserves in 1980.

Presently 26 of the 40 islands within a 45km radius of Dampier are Nature Reserves, and four species of turtle have been recorded nesting on them.

These are the Green, Hawksbill, Flatback and Loggerhead Turtle.

The beaches are also used by the public from the towns of Dampier, Karratha, Wickham and Roebourne for recreational activities.

Since 1983 regular aerial counts of turtle tracks

on beaches have been undertaken to determine the extent of turtles and distribution of turtle nesting on the islands.

This work has been supported by ground surveys, and, as each species has its own characteristic track pattern, a species nesting distribution has also been determined.

The Green turtle is the most common in the Archipelago, and nests on most beaches.

The Loggerhead and Flatback turtles prefer

beaches on the limestone based islands nearer to deep water.

Between 400 and 600 female turtles come ashore each night to lay their eggs during the nesting season from September to April.

Most turtle nesting activity appears to occur during neap tides when there is less difference between high and low tides.

Up to 150 eggs at a time may be laid by a female turtle, and she may come ashore to lay

four to six times in a nesting season.

Turtle eggs require an incubation temperature of at least 24 degrees C before development will commence, and the sex of the hatchling is determined by the incubation temperature.

For the Green turtle, eggs incubated between 24 degrees and 27.5 degrees will develop into males, and between 28 and 31.5 degrees they develop into females.

This means that eggs laid early in the season will probably develop into males, while those laid later in the season will develop into females.

Incubation temperatures above 32 degrees C are usually lethal.

Some preliminary work on nest temperatures on Barrow Island and the Dampier Archipelago show that the incubation temperature for a particular nest remains relatively constant despite ground temperature ranges of 22 degrees to 40 degrees.

Much of the data obtained on turtle utilization of the islands will be used in the preparation of a Draft Management Plan for the Nature Reserves in the Dampier Archipelago.

istics of operations in the Gascoyne Region were considered.

Kim's background is in marine research in WA.

Responsibility for Gascoyne Region will now be shared between Regional Managers Greenough (West Gascoyne) and Pibara (East Gascoyne).

Jeff and Kim's duties in the Gascoyne include working with Planning Officer Richard May in the development of Ningaloo Marine Park.

—PETER KIMBER

Greenough region staff

GREENOUGH Region became staffed and operational on September 9 when Regional Manager Geoff Mercer started work.

Geoff comes to the Department from the Queensland National Parks and Wildlife Service and brings with him extensive experience of both marine and terrestrial park management.

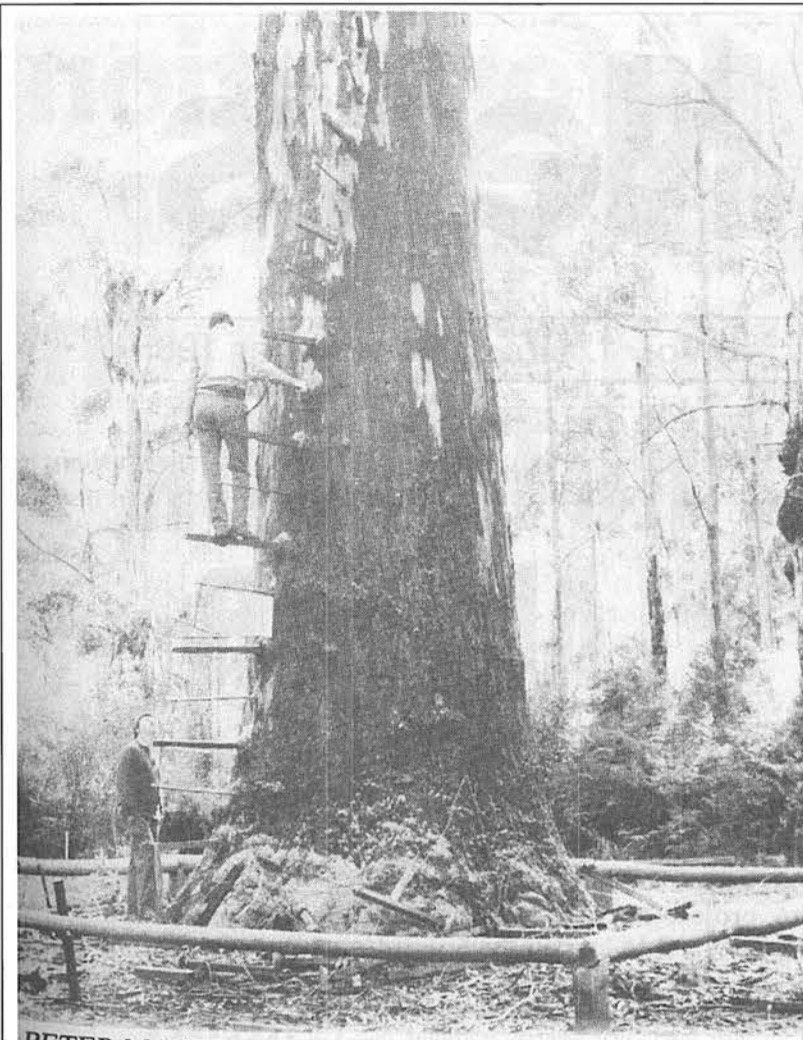
He is stationed at Geraldton.

Kelly Gillan, District Manager Moora, joined on September 2.

Kelly worked at the Forests Department's Dwellingup Research Station until 1979 when he left to take a post as biologist with Dampier Salt Ltd.

Kim Nardi swelled the ranks of Regional staff on September 16 when he started as Operations Officer, Geraldton.

Kim was formerly appointed to Carnarvon, but this was altered to Geraldton when the log-



PETER MASTERS replaces a climbing peg at the base of Pemberton's Gloucester Tree. John Jackway looks on.

Attracting tourists again... MINISTER REOPENS GLOUCESTER TREE

The Gloucester Tree at Pemberton is back on the list of highlights for tourists to the area.

The Minister assisting the Minister for Conservation and Land Management, Dave Evans, officially reopened the tree to the public at a special function on Friday, September 13.

Mr Evans said he was pleased the tree had been made safe for the public to enjoy the experience of climbing one of the few remaining lookout trees in the South West.

The tree attracts about 130,000 visitors a year and about 10,000 people make the 61m climb to the viewing platform.

Mr Evans said the number of visitors had doubled in the past 10 years and the tree was Pemberton's best known tourist attraction.

"Tree lookouts are a unique chapter in Western Australia's history," he said.

"The Gloucester Tree is the tallest fire lookout tree in the world and has been used as a lookout continuously from 1946 until 1975.

"However, even in recent times it has been used on a number of occasions and will remain a back-up fire lookout for use in emergencies."

Mr Evans paid a special tribute to the foresters who pioneered the lookout trees.

Don Stewart, who later became Conservator of Forests, was mentioned by the Minister.

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ERICA MARSHALL (right) with graphic artists John Goodlad and Trish Ryder.

Human resource studies

THE Public Service Board, in conjunction with the Western Australian Institute of Technology, recently arranged for a Post-Graduate Diploma in Human Resource Management to be offered for a group of 32 government employees, the majority of whom are employed under the Public Service Act. The one-year course started on July 22, 1985, and subjects to be studied include personnel management, industrial law, management accounting, computer studies and government administration. The Diploma course has been designed to incorporate both academic and practical studies. Trainee Human Resource Managers (as the students are titled) have been placed with a wide cross section of Public Service departments for the practical component of the course. CALM's trainee is Erica Marshall who will be working on a two day a week basis in the Department until the end of the 1985 academic year. During the long vacation she will be working full time in CALM undertaking a personnel related project that is expected to be of value to the Department (as well as contribute to her course marks). Erica will be working under the supervision of Jim Edwards in the Personnel Branch. Before starting the traineeship, Erica worked for almost 12½ years for the Public Service Board, principally on personnel and establishment/classification duties. Before being recruited into the Public Service she worked in insurance companies and libraries. Erica has a B.A. (Hons.) degree from the University of Western Australia.

John enjoys the West

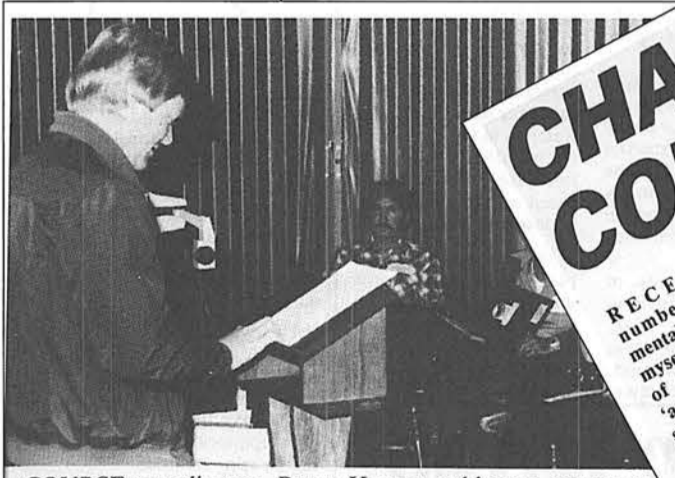
IF history is cyclical then John Blyth, (Scientific Adviser, Nature Conservation) should be employed with CALM for 12 years. That has been the cycle of the past two phases in his life. The first was as a farmer outside Melbourne. While he loved the outdoors, a combination of long hours, back breaking work and poor returns, over which he had little control, forced him off the land and into the lecture theatre. The second phase included the gaining of an honours degree in zoology and genetics from Latrobe University, and employment with the Museum of Victoria. John comes to CALM from the Museum's Biological Survey Department where he conducted and supervised research on aquatic invertebrates, especially the impact of human activities on them. He spent a lot of his time with the museum developing methods of sampling large rivers. His enthusiasm for innovation was dulled by an accident in a swollen river in which he almost drowned. John hopes that W.A.'s rivers, like its climate, will be more hospitable. While he has been here for several months, his family — school teacher wife Judy and teenage daughters Sally and Kathy — are finishing the school year in Victoria. John's first impressions of W.A. are most favourable, and he looks like becoming a long term, if not permanent, resident. As a keen cyclist he is looking for a home within "pushbike" distance to work, and once the family has settled here they will be making use of Perth's cycleways, especially those around the Swan River. With hobbies such as bird watching and native plants, he has quickly gained an appreciation of the wetlands and bush areas that are located close to the city. These features, as well as Perth's smaller population — about a third the size of Melbourne — have so far outweighed Melbourne's cultural attractions (and the loss of the Age). He is also interested in acting as a link between amateur conservation groups and CALM. His work at CALM covers the provision of scientific background on many issues relating to the influence of land management on conservation values.



CHALLENGING CONVENTION

By JENNI BARTLE

RECENTLY, a number of departmental staff, including myself, spent a couple of days attending an 'acclimatization' workshop run by Professor Steve Van Matre from Chicago, US, who presented a range of ideas and techniques to stimulate conventional environmental education. Here are some of the ideas presented and some of my feelings about the workshop. First of all, what is acclimatization (ARACC)? Well, it is "a program which helps people of all ages build a sense of relationship, in both feelings and understandings, with the natural world". The program includes: solitude experiences — to help sharpen up non-verbal skills and get in touch with the environment; use of senses; development of knowledge and understanding of basic ecological concepts. We heard lots of stories — happy ones, funny ones, and sad ones. We got grubby and we got tired, probably because my room-mates snored and talked in their sleep and kept me awake most of the night. We shared our experiences and a bit of magic; we looked things in the bush most of us had not seen for many years and we were in good luck. It was a great experience. We heard lots of stories — happy ones, funny ones, and sad ones. We got grubby and we got tired, probably because my room-mates snored and talked in their sleep and kept me awake most of the night. We shared our experiences and a bit of magic; we looked things in the bush most of us had not seen for many years and we were in good luck. It was a great experience.



COURSE coordinator, Bruce Harvey, addresses overseers at Busselton's Geographe Hotel.

Managers' role

THE role of the supervisor and good management practices was the essence of two two-day courses held for overseers in Busselton recently. Twenty-three overseers representing most forest districts attended the courses which were opened by Steve Quain, Divisional Manager of Operations and Don Grace, Manager of Protection. Instead of having one lecturer conducting all the training sessions, the course was structured so that nine guest speakers from the Department each delivered a lecture. Subjects covered included the overseers role in regard to accident prevention, people management, technical aspects, information, record keeping training and the interface of the overseer with personnel above and below him. Bruce Harvey, course co-ordinator from Central Forest Region, said that the overseer was the key person in the management of a forest district. "In the past very little training resources were given to overseers," he said. Last year, for the first time, a course was held for 12 overseers mainly from the Central Forest Region. "This year we doubled that number and hopefully before long, all overseers of prospective overseers will have had the benefit of training sessions."



BRETT YORGEY (centre) gets a demonstration of the finer points of handballing from Rod Mell (right) and Lindsay McAllan.

BRETT COPS IT SWEET

BRETT YORGEY cops it sweet most Mondays during the football season. Having a pleasant, friendly personality, the "ribbing" is often unwarranted but Brett, a courier attached to CALM's Stores Branch, plays league football for Perth. As far as supporters are concerned Perth have been in the bottom half of the premiership table for far too long, and the players have to bear the brunt of the blame. "Because he can't do anything else, Brett grins and bears it, but he believes that Perth's fortunes are about to change. To the casual observer, a team's success, or lack of it, might revolve around playing strength and confidence. As far as Brett is concerned, Perth can match name players with any other WAFL team. But as far as success is concerned, more sterner stuff than confidence is needed. Brett calls it arrogance. "Just look at Swan Districts and East Fremantle...the arrogance of their players is evident both on and off the field, even if most of it is bluff," Brett said. "The trait has been evident in Swans for about five years during which time they have won three premierships. "In the past two seasons I have seen a change in the attitude of the Subiaco players, and this has coincided with their rise up the premiership table. "In our last three games this year there were signs that the Perth players were becoming more arrogant towards the opposition, and this is a good omen for next season." Brett was recruited by Perth from the Sydney Swans and, when fit, is a regular league player. Injury has restricted his league appearances to 40 games in the past three seasons, and he missed 10 games this year. However, his 11 Sandover Medal votes from eight league games stamps him as a class player. Brett is looking towards an injury-free season next year. He has already started training and is running the Perth players were becoming more arrogant towards the op-

Old building becomes new again

WORK has started on the development of a visitor centre within The Hills Forest Discovery Centre, near CALM's Perth Hills District office.

The 'new' building was originally a house used for staff accommodation and was moved on the back of a semi-trailer about one kilometre to its new location.

Local carpenter Steve Woods worked on its restoration with the support of Perth Hills District staff.

The original facade has been maintained and the building work has been carried out to preserve its original character helping it blend in with existing buildings in the Hills Forest.



On the way to a new address for this old staff cottage. Photo - Steve Altham

by Steve Altham

It's planned that the visitor centre will provide a focal point for people visiting the Perth hills providing information about national parks, walk and bike trails, and interpretive activities designed to encourage an appreciation of the natural and cultural heritage of the region.

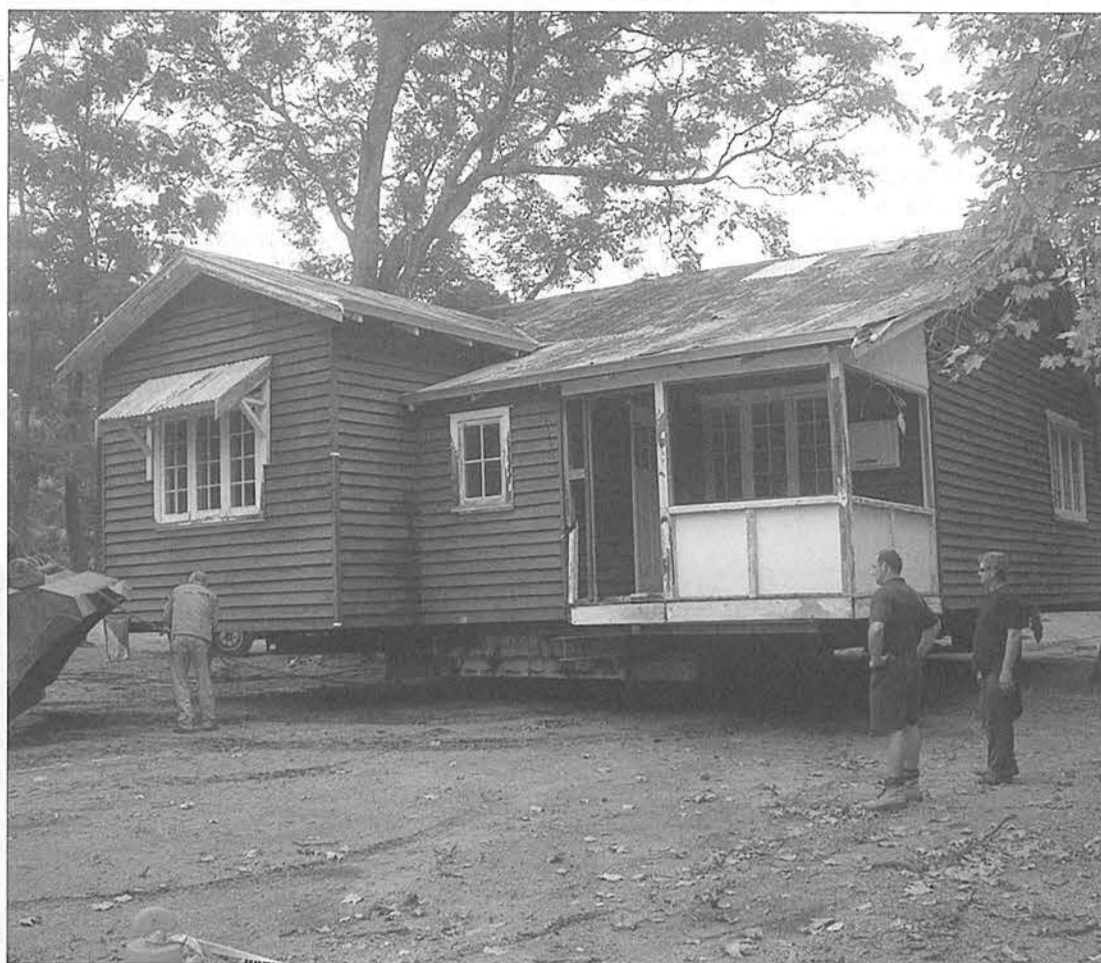
The new facility is expected to open in the first half of next year.

Located near Mundaring Weir, the area attracts thousands of visitors each year, primarily individuals and family groups on day trips for picnics and walks in the surrounding forest.

At present The Hills Forest Discovery Centre operates primarily on weekdays, with a full program of activities offered through the EcoEducation unit, and as the base for Nearer to Nature activities throughout the Swan Region.

The Visitor Centre will operate seven days a week allowing interpretive activities to be offered at weekends, catering for the large number of weekend visitors.

It will also cater for walkers on the Bibbulmun Track which passes through the centre, and cyclists using the Munda Biddi and other bike trails.



The former staff accommodation building was moved on the back of a semi-trailer about one kilometre to its new location at The Hills Forest Discovery Centre where it will become the new visitor centre. Photo - Steve Altham

Walyunga upgrade proves popular

THOUSANDS of Avon Descent spectators were treated this year to redeveloped facilities at one of the most popular vantage points of the annual white water event, Walyunga National Park.

About \$165,000 worth of upgrades were recently completed at the Walyunga Pool area.

The popular park, about 40 km north-east of Perth, attracted 1500 visitors during the Avon Descent in August.

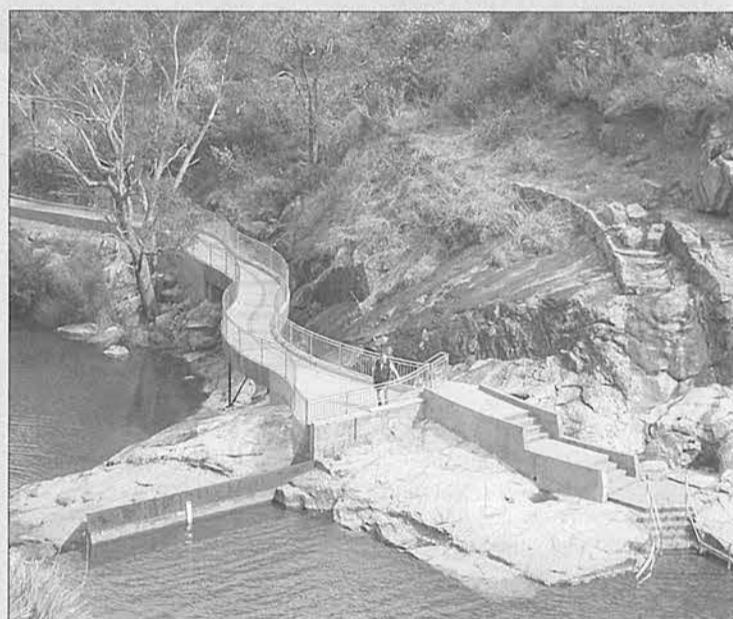
CALM Perth Hills District Field Officer, Ed Greenway, said the redevelopment had already proved popular with park visitors.

"We've had great feedback from visitors on the upgraded facilities which include extensive landscaping of the Walyunga Pool area such as retaining walls, picnic tables, grassed areas and barbecue facilities," he said.

Ed said because Walyunga National Park contained one of the largest known Aboriginal campsites around Perth and was still used by the Nyoongar people late last century, Aboriginal people had been consulted before the redevelopment project.

Meanwhile, redevelopments at Serpentine National Park, about 50 km south-east of Perth, have also been completed.

Ed said \$230,000 worth of works including a viewing platform and bridge area to the popular waterfalls had proved extremely popular with visitors.



Some of the redevelopments at Walyunga National Park. Photo - CALM

Fire review for Kimberley and arid zones

ENVIRONMENT Minister Judy Edwards has initiated an extensive review of the ecological impacts of fire regimes in the interior and northern parts of the State.

Dr Edwards said the frequency, size and intensity of fires in the inland deserts and in regions such as the Pilbara and Kimberley were of major concern, because they were altering the ecological balance and causing a decline in wildlife populations.

"Indeed, fire in the north Kimberley is a most pressing issue from a biodiversity conservation perspective. This area is a 'jewel' in the conservation crown and fire regimes are essentially out of control," she said.

"The Environmental Protection Authority also has expressed its concern over the issue and consequently, I have asked the Authority to provide me with advice on the environmental impacts of current fire regimes in the interior and northern parts of the State with an emphasis on the Kimberley.

"Key issues on which they will report are biodiversity conservation and protection of environmental health along with the threats these too frequent fires pose to life and property and community assets."

The Minister said CALM was increasing its fire management resources in areas such as the Goldfields, Pilbara and the Kimberley. A fire ecologist would be based in Kununurra to research and advise on appropriate fire management and to work with other scientists from CALM and the Northern Territory to improve knowledge of fire ecology.

Fire management plans also were being developed for the Goldfields, desert hummock grasslands and the Kimberley.

Dr Edwards said the EPA's review would take about a year because of the complexity of the issues on which it had been asked to report.

Event raises funds for cane toad traps



CALM's A/Director of Nature Conservation, Gordon Wyre (left), WA Gould League President and CALM's LANDSCOPE Expeditions Coordinator, Kevin Kenneally, CALM's Winston Kay, Kimberley Society President, Dr Mike Donaldson, and WA Museum Curator (Herpetology), Dr Paul Doughty, were pictured at the recent Cane Toad Community Awareness and Fundraising Day. Photo - Pam Ghirardi

MORE than 100 people attended the recent Cane Toad Community Awareness and Fundraising Day.

Hosted by the WA Gould League and held at the Herdsman Lake Wildlife Centre, the event raised \$1400 for the construction of cane toad traps.

The event concluded with a night spotlighting adventure for native frogs at Herdsman Lake.

Speakers included Dr Paul Doughty, Curator of Herpetology, WA Museum; Kevin Kenneally, President, WA Gould League; Dr Mike Donaldson, President, Kimberley Society; Gordon Wyre, A/Director Nature Conservation, CALM; Kat Miller, WWF Australia; Lisa Brideson, Conservation Council WA; and Roz Hart, WA Naturalists Club.

Fire planning wins award

INNOVATIVE wildfire pre-suppression planning in the Goldfields has won CALM an award in the WA section of the 2005 Australian Safer Communities Awards.

The project, Goldfields Wildfire Threat Analysis and Fire Prevention Plan, is automatically a finalist in the national awards, which will be announced in early December.

Rick Sneeuwjagt, Manager of CALM's Fire Management Services, accepted the State award earlier this month on behalf of the project team: Glen Daniel, Brad Barton, Femina

Metcalfe, Li Shu, Paul Blechynden, and Glen Tunstead from the Fire and Emergency Services Authority (FESA).

The project was developed in 2003 and 2004 for an area of 4.2 million hectares between Southern Cross and Coolgardie. This area is rich in biodiversity values and includes a corridor that contains most of the infrastructure for essential services to the Goldfields.

"Concern over the threat to these values from severe wildfires in previous years was the catalyst for the project," Rick said.

"The project was developed cooperatively with FESA and with extensive community and stakeholder involvement.

"The Goldfields Wildfire Threat Analysis and Fire Prevention Plan was designed as a model that could be applied in other parts of the State where wildfires pose a significant threat to community values.

"A similar project has now been undertaken in the Midwest Region and others are planned for the north-eastern Goldfields and in the Nullarbor/Eucla area."



Police Commissioner, Karl O'Callaghan, presents Rick Sneeuwjagt with CALM's award in the WA section of the 2005 Australian Safer Communities Awards. Photo - FESA.

Conservation briefs

Conservation Commission assessment policy released

The Conservation Commission has released its interim policy and guidelines for assessing and auditing the performance of CALM and the Forest Products Commission in carrying out and complying with management plans.

Conservation Commission Chairman, Dr John Bailey, said the policy established a framework for a consistent approach to a wide range of performance assessments.

"The policy identifies four distinct types of performance assessments to cover management plan assessments for conservation reserves and the forest management plan, and assessments that either establish the status of conservation matters or address performance in relation to significant issues in the absence of management plans," he said.

"These issues may include dieback management, weed and feral animal management, and visitor services."

This interim policy will be tested over the next 12 months and may be updated from time to time during that period. Input from CALM officers is invited to ensure that performance assessments achieve the important objective of assisting land managers in their work.

The policy is available on the Conservation Commission's web site at: www.conservation.wa.gov.au

Top three targets for environmental educators

A survey of WA environmental educators has revealed habitat protection, flora and fauna and water conservation as the top three issues targeted by environmental education.

The Survey of Environmental Education Programs was undertaken as part of the State Government's Environmental Education Strategy and Action Plan, aimed at raising awareness of major environmental issues facing the State.

Conducted between March and June, the survey generated 96 responses from environmental education programs.

Admiring the admirals at Kensington



TWO gardens at CALM's State Operations Headquarters in Kensington have played host recently to some special visitors - yellow admiral butterflies.

The admirals used their extraordinary sense of smell to seek out native pellitory, a soft annual plant, for breeding.

Robert Powell, Land and External Funding Unit (pictured left, examining eggs), said the pellitory had been planted specially in the two garden beds either side of the Training Centre.

"This year more admirals than usual have visited the garden beds at Kensington during their migration through Perth in winter and spring," he said.

"Sometimes several admirals have come at once, and many staff have seen them."

Many larvae have appeared from the eggs laid by the passing admirals, mostly in August. They grow quickly and those that survive predation will pupate in September/October, emerging as butterflies two to three weeks later.

"This year we hope to see more newly emerged butterflies than usual," Robert said.

Photo - Rhianna Mooney

Bush Rangers at Lane Poole

MORE than 80 CALM Bush Rangers and Unit Leaders descended on Lane Poole Reserve last month for their South West Regional Camp.

Bush Rangers and Unit Leaders from Waroona, Busselton, Coodanup, Katanning and Bunbury learnt about the different aspects of wildfire suppression operations and took part in other activities such as bike riding, white water rafting and kite making.

Lane Poole Reserve Ranger Ingrid Hunt said a highlight of the camp was a cooked barbecue lunch from the CALM catering trailer, which demonstrated the types of meals and provisions

by Rhianna Mooney

that are provided to staff when they are in a wildfire.

"Conservation Employees, Ralph Staines and Merv Burt, told the group about how times had changed because in the early days they were given a steak and a shovel and had to use the shovel as a plate and cook it themselves," she said.

"Ralf and Merv also showed the group the heavy-duty truck and involved the Bush Rangers in different hosing down techniques."

Waroona District High School CALM Bush Rangers Unit Leader, Kristy Smith, said that

despite the cold weather staff and students had a fantastic time.

"The kids enjoyed the opportunity to meet other kids their

same age with similar interests and they're already looking forward to next year's regional camp," she said.



Bush Rangers learn firefighting techniques at Lane Poole Reserve. Photo - CALM

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

Contract

Jennifer Jackson, Project Officer, Wildlife Branch, Kensington; Katherine Best, Research Officer, Fire Management Services, Kensington; Catherine Prideaux, Project Officer, Environmental Management Branch, Kensington; Janine Tasaka-Owens, Project Officer, Park Policy and Services, Kensington; Nisha Powell, Project Officer, Environmental Management Branch, Kensington; Anthony Coyle, Ranger, Millstream-Chichester National Park; Ryan White, Officer, Information Services Branch; Anthony Richardson, Assistant Reserves Officer, Goldfields Region, Kalgoorlie.

Permanent

Kathy Gosby, Senior Silviculturalist, Policy and Practices Branch, Kensington; Jeremy Flynn, Landscape Architect, Swan Region;

Leonie Monks, Research Scientist, Kensington; Russell Venn, Disease Hygiene Officer, Forest Management Branch, Bunbury; Graham Holmes, Administration Officer, Wheatbelt Region, Narrogin.

Permanent transfer

Hardy Derschow, Pilbara Aboriginal Training Officer, Pilbara Region to William Bay National Park, Frankland District; Mike Meinema, Midwest Region, Geraldton to District Manager, Perth Hills District, Swan Region.

Promotion

Matthew Warnock, Clearing Assessment Officer, Wildlife Branch, Kensington; Luke Coney, Parks and Visitor Services Coordinator, Albany District; Michelle Vellios, Administration Officer, Science Division, Woodvale Research Centre; Brad Bourke,

Assistant Fire Operations Officer, Kirup Work Centre.

Contract ceased

Melisa Lever, Licensing Officer, Park Policy and Services, Kensington; Rosalind Hart, Education Officer, WA Herbarium; Christina Pailthorpe, Project Officer, Wildlife Protection Branch, Kensington.

Temporary deployment

Michael Roberts, Senior Technical Officer, Wildlife Protection Branch, Kensington; Lisa Curnow, Administration Officer, Narrogin District to People Services Branch, Kensington; Barbara Slade, Personal Assistant, People Services Branch, Kensington to Corporate Headquarters, Crawley; Megan O'Connor, Assistant Fire Operations Officer, Midwest Region, to Wellington District, Collie; Natasha Samuelraj, Administration Officer, People

Services Branch, Kensington to Science Division, Kensington.

Temporary transfer

Gerard Ots, Licensing Officer, Park Policy and Services, Kensington.

Leave without pay

Judy Davidson, Marine Conservation Officer, Marine Conservation Branch, Fremantle; Gina Woods, Clerical Officer, West Kimberley District, Broome.

Resignation

Sonja Tasovac, Officer - Apiary and Leasing, Park Policy and Services, Kensington; Peter Wilkins, Senior Ranger, Albany District Office, Fitzgerald River/Jerramungup National Park; Johanna Milner, Officer, Exmouth District; Mark Pittavino, Parks and Recreation Officer, Blackwood District, Busselton.