



*CALM workers erecting the fence around a remnant rainforest patch at Mitchell Plateau*

# Fence protects rainforest patch

**In early August, CALM personnel erected the first fence around a small patch of remnant rainforest at the Mitchell Plateau.**

The fence was erected as part of the National Rainforest Conservation Program with part funding from the Save the Bush scheme.

There are many small rainforest patches in the Kimberley that support a diverse assemblage of quite unique plants and animals. But, like many other fragile areas, they are under threat. One of the major threats to these particular areas is their destruction

by stock, notably cattle and donkeys. Cattle intrude into rainforest in search of food and, in addition to the damage from grazing, trampling by these animals damages existing plants, prevents seedlings from growing, compacts the soil, causes erosion and disturbs native animals.

Construction of the fence at the Mitchell Plateau was an arduous task. The team - Allan Thomson, Mark Pittavino, Grant Lamb, Dave Grosse, Estelle Leyland and Gordon Graham - had to carry fencing materials up and down steep slopes, clamber over rocks, and

drive fence pickets into the hard laterite soil.

Approval for the project was received from the Department of Land Administration (DOLA) and there was also consultation with local Aboriginal communities that have an interest in the area.

Apart from protecting a patch of rainforest, the sites will become important for research and monitoring. They will be compared with similar areas that have not been fenced so the effects of cattle on the rainforests can be monitored and the rehabilitation of the forests can be documented.

