

Nyungar culture in Walyunga



Dr Peter Bindon (left facing) describes the possible significance of the quartz outcrop in Walyunga National Park to CALM rangers and wildlife officers. Story and photo by David Gough

Tall tales and true on tape

ORAL historian Julia Ball has recently recorded retired CALM forester Len Talbot's recollections and knowledge of the Mundaring area for an innovative CALM project.

Information and anecdotes provided by Len will help form the basis of an

by Lotte Lent

Some of the likely highlights on the trail cassette will include Aboriginal use of the area, early timber-getting, weir construction, the tale of the Spanish bushranger, ambush at Chipper's Leap,

pected to include a musical component featuring songs from and about the area and which could be made available for sale or hire.

The trail is visualised as beginning just west of John Forrest National Park on the Great Eastern Highway and continuing

Mundaring Weir, the Dell, through to Kalamunda then up past Gooseberry Hill National Park to form a loop.

Several opportunities will be provided for visitors to get out of their cars for a picnic or to take

a forest walk at areas of historical interest.

Anyone with information or ideas for stories to be included on the cassette is invited to contact Stev Slavin at the Hills Forest Office on (09) 295 2244.

PENNY Hussey, Trevor Walley and Bouyden Yarren, from Wildlife Protection in Como, joined National Park Rangers Ross McGill, Hardy Dershow, Karl Mucjanko, Keith Tresidder and Tony Tapper for a tour of Walyunga National Park with Dr Peter Bindon, Head of Anthropology at the WA Museum.

The tour was organised by Trevor Walley, at the request of Ross McGill and George Duxbury, to give the wildlife officers and national park rangers an appreciation of the history and culture of the local Nyungar people, who used areas of the park as regular camping and meeting places.

Customs

The long-term plan is to be able to provide an interpretive and educational program on Nyungar customs and their hunting and gathering techniques.

The tour began at the archaeological site to the west of Walyunga Pool carpark.

Here, Peter described the way the area was used as a camping ground and tool-making site.

He explained the way in which the museum is able to date artefacts found in such sites and estimate the length of time sites were used.

One particular rock for which the area was known

is Mylonite. This rock flakes when struck and the flakes were used to make cutting tools, sharpening tools and, when glued along a smooth stick, produced sharp serrated knives.

Near to this camping ground was a small area thick with yams, which were dug out and eaten.

The next area visited was the Walyunga Heritage Trail, which runs upstream from Walyunga Pool. Here, Peter described in detail the various topics covered by the signs along the trail.

After lunch, the group went to a remote part of the park to view a large quartz outcrop which was believed to be a quarry site.

Although the site was very interesting, Peter was not sure it was a quarry since there was no immediate evidence of manufacture of rock tools.

All of the rock pieces appeared to have been produced by rock breaking and cracking from the heat of bush fires. However, Peter said the site warranted further investigation.

The day's activities ended with a demonstration of fire-lighting using the dry stems from the blackboy grass-tree.

Museum visit

As a follow-up to the field trip around Walyunga, the participants were taken on a 'behind-the-scenes' tour of the WA Museum to view some of the Aboriginal artefacts from Walyunga area.

