



Technical advisor Helmut Hiddel checking glazing work at the homestead.
Photo by Carolyn Thomson

Tree park tourism

A JOINT project between CALM and the Balingup community, to develop the Golden Valley Tree Park, is just beginning to blossom.

"The tree park will become a local tourist attraction, aiming to promote the growing of trees and the preservation of endangered species. It also has a very important educational role," CALM district manager Peter Bidwell said.

"It features both native and exotic species of hardwoods and focuses on endangered species around the world."

On one side of the road there are species such as weeping willows, poplars and oaks, while the other side features Australian eucalypts, including a few Goldfields species.

"At the moment we are establishing a rainforest

area in one of the valleys," Peter said.

"Golden Valley features walktrails, scenic lookouts, a picnic area, gazebo and a maypole. It currently attracts up to 10 000 visitors a year.

"It is particularly beautiful in spring when the countryside is green and in autumn, with the colour changes of the European species.

"We're very pleased the community is involved in a voluntary capacity."

The old homestead on the property is currently being renovated and will be developed as a Tree Resource Centre and caretaker's residence.

It has historic importance, has been listed by the National Trust, and placed on the Heritage Council's interim list.

Peter said a retired builder, Helmut Hiddel,

was working for CALM on a voluntary basis as a technical advisor for the restoration.

"Helmut restored many old homes in Europe after World War II and is now passing on his invaluable knowledge and skills to CALM staff and other volunteers," he said.

The land was originally purchased by the old Forests Department to establish a pine plantation.

When CALM began to manage the area, the homestead was almost falling down.

Some of the renovation work was completed by LEAP workers, but now most of the work is being undertaken by CALM staff with the help of local volunteers.

"We hope to build the tree farm up as a tourist attraction to become self-funding," Peter said.

