

Building bridges—for visitors' comfort and plant protection

by Tammie Reid

GONE are the days when visitors to Lane Poole Reserve can be left to their own devices to cross Nanga Brook on a slippery moss-covered log.

Instead, as part of CALM's duty of care and responsible recreation site design, we must provide safe, well designed footbridges.

So far, five footbridges have been designed and constructed by the Dwellingup crews. The timber was cut with a Lewis saw from logs salvaged to make room for SEC power line poles, and trees felled to secure wildfire boundaries.

The on-site work involved pulling out the old logs, designing the stringer and stumping systems to bridge long spans and negotiate shallow soil over

rock, and finally the construction itself—all best done in the height of summer when the brook is gently flowing and the water is not too cold.

The visitor safety review at Nanga Mill Recreation site is all part of a bigger plan to review and recommend a Master Recreation Plan for the Lane Poole Reserve.

The review will be done in the context of the LPR Management Plan, and coordinated by landscape architect Tracy Churchill. A small project team will prepare strategies and development options for public and departmental input.

Dwellingup acting district manager Steve Raper said he welcomed the

move.

"Lane Poole Reserve's beautiful river setting, its close proximity to Perth and boasting the largest camping facility on CALM-managed land, make it a major attraction for more than 200,000 visitors each year," Steve said.

"Most of the camping-recreation development was done under the Federal government's employment schemes of 1983-84, before CALM was formed.

"Today we're dealing with an annual maintenance cost of \$130,000, which is almost 50 per cent of Dwellingup District's total recreation and tourism budget. Our visitors have different expectations. We also have a duty to protect and conserve the natural assets of the reserve from

those 200,000 pairs of tramping feet!

"A Master Plan will provide the vision for what we want to provide and how we might do this. It will set our yearly budget priorities so we can target our money wisely.

"Still in the early stages the master plan ideas floating around are exciting: a bike-based travel route through the valley, entry roads redesigned to more easily gain access to individualised camp sites where materials used in the buildings blend with the surrounding environment.

If you want to know more or are keen to comment on the development options please register your interest with Tracy Churchill by phoning her on (09) 334 0374, or by fax on (09) 334 0465.

After waiting for shrinkage of the green wood to occur, forest workers Keith Harris and a camera-shy Kevin Pratt check the stability of one of the Lane Poole Reserve bridges. Photo by Tammie Reid

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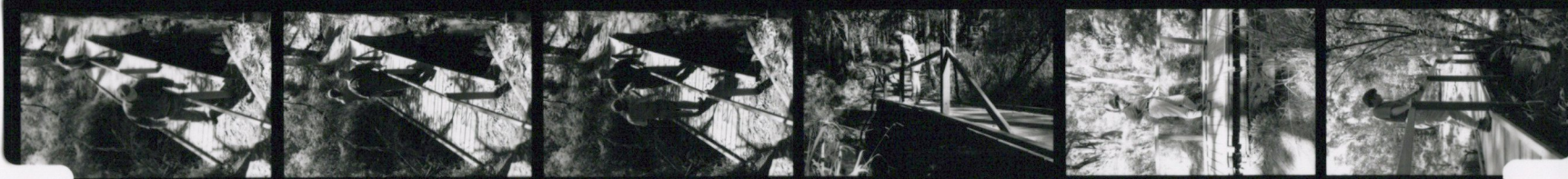
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