

ls,  
s,  
he



# SIGNS OF THE TIMES

by Wayne Schmidt

**Y**ou and your family have been looking forward to this camping tour for weeks, and you haven't been disappointed so far. The scenery has been magnificent, the weather superb and even the fish have been cooperative. Everything has been just about perfect, except for the hordes of other city dwellers hellbent on sharing your holiday with you.

Fed up with the crowds, you decide to venture further afield and leave the masses behind. Having repacked all the gear and kids, you set off down a winding track. Kilometre after kilometre, you push on, enchanted by the landscape unfolding before you.

As your journey leads you deeper into the bush, you begin to experience a growing sense of uneasiness. The track you're travelling has narrowed

appreciably and is overhung by dense scrub. The forest is closing in around you. For a minute you think of turning back, but quickly dismiss the thought from your mind. By this time you're not sure where you are or how you got here, but there's no way you're going to lose face with the family.

For the tenth time in as many minutes, you glance at the petrol gauge. It's looking ominously low. 'Fool', you think, 'I should have filled up yesterday when I had the chance. Should have picked up a map from that ranger bloke, too.'

Anxiety mounting, you continue to scan the track ahead looking for some sign, any sign, of human presence. Maybe that crowded campground wasn't so bad after all.

Then, rounding the next bend, you spot it, a large metal signboard jutting from the undergrowth. Pulling alongside, you strain to make out the text . . . something about disease risk area. There's an accompanying map with what appears to be a network of roads. Unfortunately, most of it has been obliterated by bullet holes. As you glance over the map for the last time, a faded message catches your eye . . . 'YOU ARE HERE'.



## Signs of the Times

Signs — written and graphic symbols used to convey ideas or messages — are important tools of communication. We rely on signs to guide and direct, to advise and inform, to advertise and entertain. Signs also have an important role in assisting us to make sense of our surroundings.

The signposting of W.A.'s 17 million ha of national parks, nature reserves, State forests and timber reserves is a responsibility of monumental proportions, given the myriad of roads, tracks and landmarks dispersed across the State. While a complete stocktake of CALM's signs has yet to be completed, they are most likely to number in the tens of thousands. Signs provide an important link with the public. In some cases they are the only link . . .

The development and maintenance of this extensive system is important to the welfare of all who visit or derive their income from CALM land. It is equally important to the rangers, wildlife officers and foresters who live and work on that land.

W.A. recently adopted a State-wide sign standard. Based on one developed by the Queensland National Parks and Wildlife Service and Department of Forestry, this new standard provides guidelines on the use, design, construction, and placements of a wide range of sign types. Included are recreation and area identification signs, office signs, road and walk track signs, interpretative signs and display shelters. The basic aim of this sign standard is to ensure that information is conveyed in an attractive, legible and cost-effective manner.

The new sign standard incorporates symbol signs, many of which are based on internationally accepted

designs. These symbols, which are often simple graphic representations, can convey an idea more effectively than lengthy written messages, particularly for people who are not literate in the English language.

Even with the adoption of a standard, there is ample scope for development of new signs and formats. Recently, innovative designs and distinctive entry signs have been installed at a number of national parks. Constructed from natural materials such as local stone and rammed earth, these signs reflect the character of the landscape that surrounds them.

The implementation of the new sign standard, and the progressive replacement of old signs is a major undertaking. When this task is completed, it will ensure that your use of the State's parks, forests and reserves is enjoyable, informative and safe. □



Wayne Schmidt

Interpretative signs help deepen our appreciation of the environment.



Bob Taylor

One of the new-style signs designed to blend harmoniously with their surroundings.

The display shelter at Millstream.



Gill Field

# LANDSCOPE

Volume 3 No. 1  
Spring Edition/September 1987

Contents	Page
Lest We Forget by Helen Fordham .....	3
Bush Telegraph .....	7
All My Life's A Circle by Colleen Henry-Hall .....	9
Staying Alive by Liana Christensen .....	13
Thar' She Blows by John Bannister .....	24
Nostalgic Naturalist .....	27
Spring Collection — photo-essay text by Judith Brown .....	28
A Thorny Problem — Crown of Thorns Starfish in W.A. by Barry Wilson and James Stoddart .....	35
The Fringing Forests of Lake Argyle by Chris Done .....	40
Urban Antics: Snakes by Andrew Cribb .....	43
Eating Up the Past by Andrew Cribb .....	44
Signs of the Times by Wayne Schmidt .....	49
Portfolio — Richard Woldendorp by Sweton Stewart .....	51
Letters .....	54

Executive Editor: Sweton Stewart  
Editor: Liana Christensen  
Designer: Trish Ryder/Robyn Mundy

All maps by Department of Conservation and Land Management  
Mapping Section.

Offset plates by Photolitho-PM.

Typesetting by Printworks.

Printed in Western Australia by the Department of Services, State Printing  
Division. ISSN 0815-4465.

© All material copyright. No part of the contents of the publication may  
be reproduced without the consent of the publishers.

## COVER PHOTO:

Stark silhouettes evoke the spirit of our remote  
regions. This photograph was taken near  
Quairading by Hans Versluis.

## EDITORIAL

Public participation in land management sounds like a great idea: the community has a chance to study and comment upon the government's proposals. The scientists and managers can keep their fingers on the pulse of public demand. But sometimes good ideas are hard to put into practice.

Last April the Department of Conservation and Land Management released draft management plans for the south-west forest regions, and a draft timber strategy for W.A. The release of the plans was accompanied by a series of workshops and public meetings, and extensive media releases. Four hundred and thirty-five letters offering briefings and speakers were sent out. Ninety groups responded. Public comment on any aspect of the plans and the strategy was invited.

4070 responses were received. This included 3505 proformas (from 30 organisations) and 565 substantial submissions, some up to 200 pages in length. Many submissions endorsed the plans in their entirety; some rejected them out of hand; others suggested hundreds of minor changes.

How can so many, and such varied, views possibly be integrated simply and sensibly into a final plan? What weighting should be given to the views of different groups or individuals? Who decides what is 'right' when pure value judgements are to be made and values are in conflict? How should one resolve an issue when the views of a large section of the public are quite different from those of a small group of scientists working closely on the problem? These questions represent the sharp end of public participation. It's a relatively new game for W.A.'s land managers, and one in which the rules are still unwritten and ill-defined.

What is certain is that the Department's policy and planning staff have a big job ahead of them, and a job which must be done to the highest possible professional standard. It is important that the final plans for our south-west forests reflect the tremendous thought, effort and interest shown by the community; and it is essential that there are efficient mechanisms for public involvement in conservation and land management, because these processes will be the norm, not the exception in years ahead.

## SUBSCRIPTIONS

One year's subscription (4 issues) — \$10  
Special Offer: Landscape Gold Star — one year's  
subscription plus, one year's free entry to national parks  
(excludes camping fees), plus free maps and brochures  
with each issue — \$30

Back issues — \$2.50

For details please phone: 367 0437, 367 0439.



Published by Dr S. Shea, Executive Director, Department of  
Conservation and Land Management, 50 Hayman Road, Como,  
W.A. 6152.