

Professor
Susan Moore

by Tracy Shea and Amanda Smith

Professor Susan 'Sue' Moore believed that in order for people to advocate for the protection of our natural world, they must first experience and enjoy it in a sustainable and responsible way. During her illustrious career, Sue was at the fore of nature-based tourism research and made a lasting contribution to the conservation of Western Australia's natural values.



As a child, Susan ‘Sue’ Moore was an enthusiastic member of the Gould League and loved spending time in the wetlands and billabongs around her home in Jerilderie. She developed an understanding that people needed to spend time in nature, in order to appreciate it and want to protect it. This notion guided her career, and she was a keen believer that parks needed visitors in order to gain advocates and community and political support. However, as an environmental scientist, she knew this had to be done in a sustainable and responsible way, in order to protect the very thing that visitors come to enjoy. So, she dedicated her career to championing the importance of the environment and the role of social science in conservation and protected area management.

Through her work, Sue became highly regarded as an expert voice in nature-based tourism, both in Australia and overseas; and was a respected and revered innovative, multi-disciplinary researcher. She brought passion and humour to her work and embodied the concept ‘if you choose work that you love, you will love what you do’.

Sadly, Sue passed away in December 2016. But she leaves behind a legacy of research, a band of former students who benefitted from her generous tutelage, and a throng of colleagues and friends who remember her as a truly wonderful person who contributed much to nature-based tourism and conservation.

THE EARLY YEARS

Sue was born in Finley in New South Wales in 1960. She grew up in Jerilderie in the southern Riverina region of New South Wales before her family moved to Camden – 70 kilometres south-west of Sydney. She completed a first-class honours degree in natural resources at the University of New England in 1981, and then joined the public service in Western Australia, working with the Department of Fisheries and Wildlife as its first female scientist. An integral part of her role was to coordinate community participation – a new concept at the time – for the planning



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Main Professor Susan ‘Sue’ Moore was instrumental in developing the management plan for Fitzgerald River National Park.

Photo – Friends of Fitzgerald River National Park

Inset Professor Susan Moore.

Photo – Courtesy of the Moore family

Above Sue liaised with the community at Fitzgerald River National Park.

Photo – DBCA

process of the first nature reserve and national park management plans in the Perth metropolitan area. Later, with the former Department of Conservation and Land Management (CALM), she became involved in surveying flora and fauna, ensuring ecological knowledge was included in field activities such as prescribed burning, weed control and the development of roads and trails. She also applied her skills to the development of the management plans for the Fitzgerald River National Park – one of the largest and most botanically significant national parks in Australia, and WA’s only UNESCO Biosphere Reserve – and D’Entrecasteaux National Park.

After nine years, Sue took leave from the department to undertake a PhD at the University of Washington, Seattle, USA, where – as a prestigious Harkness Fellow – she compared park planning in WA with that of the USA as part of her investigation into natural resource

sociology. It was here that she also gained her first teaching experience.

She returned to CALM in 1994, and used what she’d learned to develop WA’s first Directory of Nature-Based Tourism Opportunities. Then, in 1995, she accepted a lecturing post in the School of Environmental Science at Murdoch University. She became a full Professor in 2013 and merged her academic skills with her practical experience, and her extensive network of contacts, to co-found the highly successful Nature Based Tourism Research Group and a series of pioneering courses in ecotourism, including a new ecotourism degree in the School of Environmental Science. This put Murdoch University on the world map for its nature-based tourism research. While at Murdoch University, she also brought in numerous research grants, and received a number of teaching and research honours and awards, including the Vice-Chancellor’s Award for excellence in research.

ENDURING LEGACY

During her career, Sue supervised 19 PhD students and lectured thousands more in environmental science, nature-based tourism and protected area management. For many of these students, she continued to be their champion, advisor and sounding board even after they completed their studies. Perhaps one of Sue’s most enduring legacies will



be the significant number of students who benefitted from her passion and teaching, and will go on to help protect the environment for decades to come. International scholars are still undertaking sabbaticals at Murdoch University on the strength of contacts Sue established with people overseas. In recognition of her contribution to the university and its students, Murdoch University established the 'Susan Moore Memorial Prize in Nature-Based Tourism'. And she was posthumously awarded the Murdoch University 2016 Senate Medal in the School of Veterinary and Life Sciences.

But it wasn't just her students who she inspired through her outstanding communication skills; she was able to deftly communicate scientific findings to a broad audience. And her success as a teacher and researcher was grounded by her practical land management experience.

She seamlessly married well-considered and researched theory with practical examples to enlighten audiences about nature-based tourism management, including through 60 international conference papers and almost 100 national and local conference papers. She was also a prolific writer, and published more than 100 articles, chapters, reports and books, including the best-selling academic works *Natural Area Tourism: Ecology, Impacts and Management*, and *Wildlife Tourism*. She also sat on the editorial boards of respected international journals for tourism and ecotourism and reviewed a number of manuscripts each year for various international journals.

As well as leaving an impression on the government and academic sectors, Sue left her mark on the tourism industry. She was an active member of the Forum Advocating Cultural and Eco Tourism

(FACET) and was involved in countless FACET workshops and conferences either as a presenter or attendee. Sue embraced these opportunities to share ideas and have discussions with others about nature-based/ecotourism and protected area management. Her significant contribution was recognised in 2017, when she was posthumously awarded the Pat Barblett Medal at the joint FACET/WA Parks Foundation Conference.

Those who knew and worked with Sue will remember her as a truly great friend and colleague. She is survived by her husband Warren Tacey and her children Jess and Sam. And, while she is sorely missed by those who knew and loved her, her profound research and enduring influence on her students, will no doubt see her impact on tourism and nature conservation on a local and international scale continue for many years.

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Above Sue at Murdoch University.

Above right Sue arranged for Emeritus Professor Paul Eagles from the University of Waterloo, Canada (second from right) to visit Murdoch University. They are pictured here with Dr Ross Dowling and Dr David Newsome. Photos – Murdoch University

Above inset and right Sue coordinated a project that looked at the values and tourism opportunities of the coastal waters of the Kimberley. Photo – Tourism WA



Tracy Shea was DBCA's Parks and Wildlife Service assistant director policy and planning until her retirement in 2018. She is now a Park Ambassador for the WA Parks Foundation (www.ourwaparks.org.au) and runs her own consulting business – Tracy Shea Communications. She can be contacted on 0434 131 174 or by email (tshea@q-net.net.au).

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'Touched by nature' is a feature that tells the stories of people who have used their experiences in nature to enrich the lives of others.