



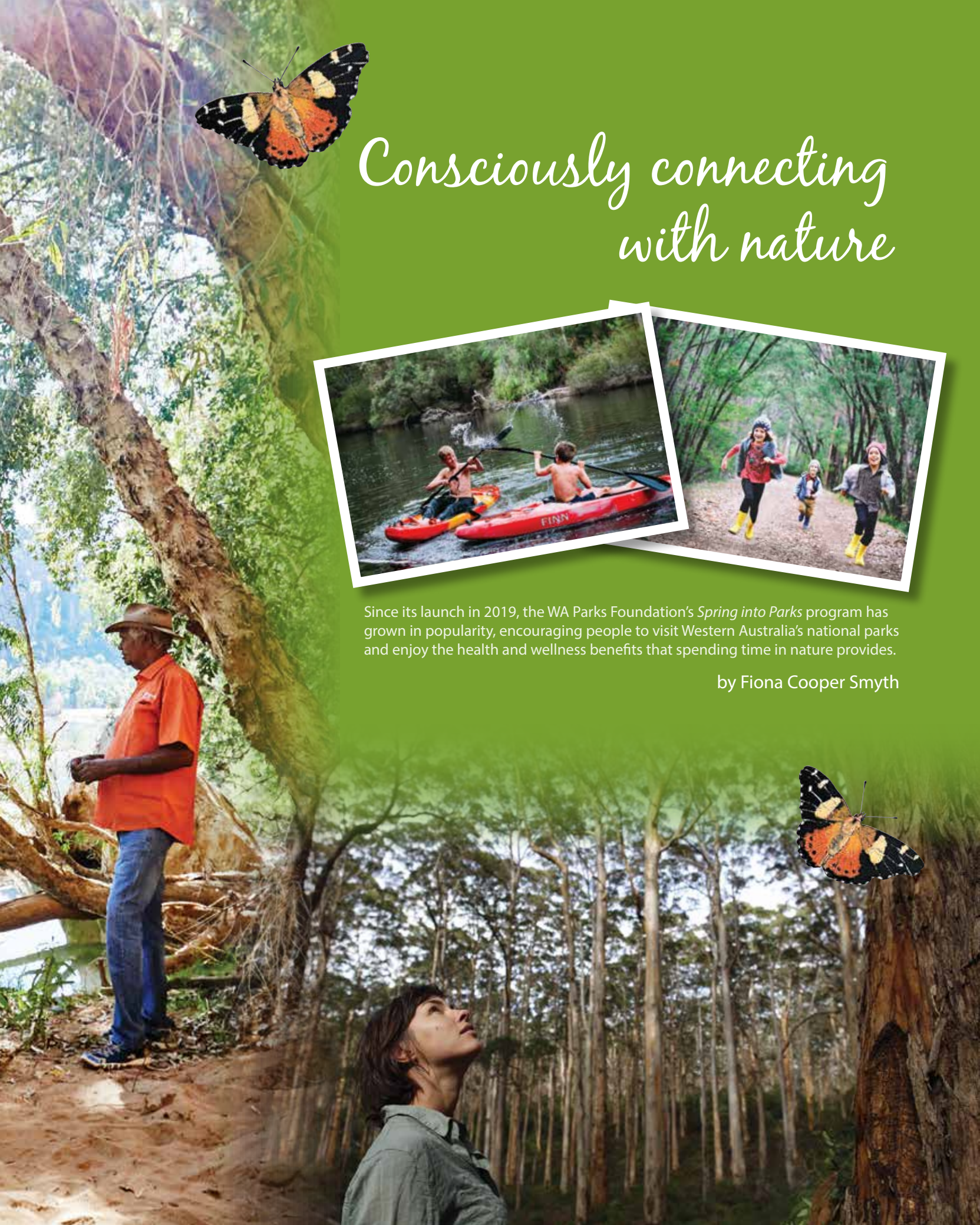


Consciously connecting with nature



Since its launch in 2019, the WA Parks Foundation's *Spring into Parks* program has grown in popularity, encouraging people to visit Western Australia's national parks and enjoy the health and wellness benefits that spending time in nature provides.

by Fiona Cooper Smyth



The core philosophy of the WA Parks Foundation focuses on encouraging a love for parks and enjoying spending time in nature. As the charity partner for Western Australia's national parks, the Foundation developed an annual program in 2019 promoting the health and wellness benefits of connecting to nature.

The *Spring into Parks* program, featuring a calendar of activities and events in parks, has been renewed for a fourth year and is gaining traction and popularity with every passing year.

Throughout the months of September and October, the WA Parks Foundation, in partnership with the Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions (DBCA), presents an online events calendar—building on its *30-Day Wellness Challenge* held in June—that is filled with events and activities in park locations across WA.

“*Spring into Parks* celebrates WA's spectacular wilderness and connects people to nature through a diverse range of events and activities—from scavenger hunts to stargazing, hut building and flag making, arts and crafts and even yoga in an ancient cave,” Hon Kerry Sanderson AC CVO, WA Parks Foundation Chair and former Governor of Western Australia said.

“Other events in the past have included birdwatching in Broome, sky walking in Kalbarri, learning about bush tucker, guided bushwalks, forest bathing and hiking in the hills. There is something for everyone.”

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Main Storytelling at Bandiilingan National Park (Windjana Gorge).

Right Boranup Forest, Leeuwin-Naturaliste National Park.

Inset left Kayaking on the Warren River near Pemberton.

Inset right Exploring trails near Margaret River

Above Lucky Bay, Cape Le Grand National Park.

Photos – Tourism WA



“We encourage everyone to get involved and ultimately become stewards of nature for WA.”

CONSCIOUSLY CONNECTING

‘Consciously connect with nature’ is the theme for the 2022 *Spring into Parks* program. As well as focusing on the benefits of spending time in nature for improved mental health and wellbeing, the campaign highlights the cultural and environmental significance of the land, promotes WA's incredible biodiversity and highlights the importance of conserving our parks and reserves for present and future generations.

Funded recently by Lotterywest, the program showcases WA's national parks and encourages everyone to ‘spring into parks’ by spending time outdoors, getting creative, getting active and consciously connecting with nature.

Over the past three years, linking with government, corporate and community-based organisations, *Spring into Parks* has featured more than 600 activities, across more than 200 park locations state-wide. Its associated digital campaign has created more than two million social media impressions.

MAGICAL MOMENTS

“A highlight this year will be the ‘Moments in Nature’ photographic competition in October, encouraging

amateur photographers and nature-lovers to capture memorable moments in nature and celebrate the beauty of WA's magnificent national parks, marine parks, reserves and forests,” Mrs Sanderson said.

“Magical moments are made when people ‘wander out yonder’.”

“Everyone who has a smartphone, has a camera. We encourage people to submit their favourite, most memorable or picturesque photos taken recently for their chance to win a prize and be featured online,” she said.

“It's wonderful to capture a moment in time when the light is just right and the scene just perfect! It becomes a precious memento of an outdoor experience.

“The scope is wide open as long as the image is taken in one of WA's national parks or marine parks, forests or reserves.”

GET INVOLVED

The WA Parks Foundation is keen to engage with outdoor and nature enthusiasts and collaborate with organisations to make *Spring into Parks* even bigger and better.

Registrations are open for licensed tour operators to sign up to be a part of the program and have trips, tours, events and activities featured on the online calendar of events.



Moments in Nature photographic competition

Submit your favourite, most memorable or picturesque photos taken recently in a national park, forest, reserve or marine park for your chance to win a prize and be featured online. (terms and conditions apply).

Prizes include:

- \$300 voucher for RAC Parks & Resorts accommodation
- \$300 voucher for the Matagarup Zip and Climb
- \$200 voucher to spend at Camera Electronic in Perth
- Two Feet and a Heart Beat Tour for two
- Mindful In Nature Forest Therapy (Shinrin-yoku) in Kings Park voucher for two.

Runners up will receive a national park pass for access to WA's national parks, provided by DBCA. Visit ourwaparks.org.au/springintoparks

“Programs like Spring into Parks aim to increase our knowledge, enhance our connection to Country, help protect our flora and fauna and improve conservation outcomes for the long term.

“The south-west of WA is home to one of the world’s 36 global biodiversity hotspots. We have 103 national parks, 17 marine parks, three natural World Heritage areas, and our State is home to 70 percent of Australia’s mammals, many of which are endangered or threatened so they need our help,” Mrs Sanderson said.

“We encourage everyone to get involved and ultimately become stewards of nature for WA.”

Licensed tour operators can sign up at ourwaparks.org.au/spring-into-parks-registration

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Top Sugarloaf Rock, Leeuwin-Naturaliste National Park.

Above Cape Range National Park.

Right Warren River near Pemberton.

Photos – Tourism WA



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