

## Armadale blitzes John Tonkins

Bungendore Park Management Committee received the fourth-ever Gold Greening Award to be presented when it was honoured at the 1994 John Tonkin Greening Awards for its outstanding achievements in environmental conservation.

Greening Western Australia Chairman Frank Schaper said the committee's dedicated efforts and commitment had transformed Bungendore Park into a living example of what conservation was all about.

The prestigious awards were presented by Environment Minister Kevin Minson at a ceremony at Government House on 28 October.

Brett Tizard, a founding member of the Armadale Settlers' Common Advisory Committee, won the Individual Endeavour Award. He is author of the very popular *Reality, Dreams and Pathway — A manual for preparing and implementing management plans*.

The awards are presented by Greening Western Australia to recognise outstanding achievements towards the conservation and establishment of native vegetation throughout the State.

"The winners were chosen from some of the most impressive finalists since the awards began and I am certain their achievements will encourage others to become involved in conserving the State's vegetation," Frank said.

Jeff Anderton was highly commended for his work at Port Kennedy, as was David Pike for his work on several bushland areas in the Stirling area. Bayswater Greenwork was a finalist in the community group category.

Greening Western Australia was joined by the State Government, Bunnings Forest Products, Chamber of Mines and Energy, Hamersley Iron, SECWA and the Wildflower Society of WA in sponsoring the awards.



### New book launched

*Bushland Plant Survey* — a guide to plant community survey for the community was recently launched by the Wildflower Society. The book, written by botanist Bronwen Keighery, is a comprehensive guide to surveying plants in a local bushland area.

The techniques described in the book were used on the Swan Coastal Plain during five years of survey work involving community participation and are currently being used in an extension of this work to provide information for the System 6 update.

The book is aimed at people without formal training in botany.

*Bushland Plant Survey* is divided into two sections: the first is a step by step guide to doing a survey of vegetation and flora and the second is a brief introduction to botanical jargon.

The book was published by the Perth branch of the Wildflower Society. It costs \$10 (plus \$2 postage) and can be obtained from the Wildflower Society, PO Box 637, NEDLANDS WA 6009.



Greening Western Australia Chairman Frank Schaper, Bungendore Park Management Committee members Ken McKay and Kim Sarti with the Minister for the Environment Kevin Minson.



# Ecoplan update

— with Margo O'Byrne and Jill Harris, EPA community involvement co-ordinators



As 1994 slips into history and we begin a new year, it's a good time to reflect on the many achievements from the year that was and look forward to new challenges in 1995. The last few months of 94 were very busy for everyone, with bush regeneration work, flora and fauna surveying, the Greening Australia conference and bush regeneration courses held in North Fremantle, Wanneroo and the Hills.

The Ecoplan regional coordinators met in October. Regional coordinators do a remarkable job in providing a contact point for new people coming into Ecoplan and linking them with groups already working in the region, or helping them to form new groups. A couple of the people who have been working in this role are interested in handing it on to a new person so we are calling for nominations. See the article in this newsletter for details.

Among the things discussed at the coordinators' meeting was the need to bring people together more, to learn from each others' experiences. We decided to expand the scope of regional coordinators' meetings to include the broader membership of active groups. Get-togethers will be held quarterly, each in a different region, and will focus on issues of general interest to Ecoplan volunteers. Any member of a friends' group will be welcome to attend. Input on what you would like to see covered in these sorts of meetings is welcome.

The scene for this type of interaction was set by the Management Plan Field Day, held at the Armadale Settlers' Common. This came about as a way of sharing the experience the Armadale group has had in preparing and implementing a management plan with groups just embarking on the adventure. Members of the Friends of Hudman Reserve in Boya initiated the idea as they are in the early stages of preparing a management plan for their reserve.

Many other workshops were held over spring, including a fauna workshop in Bold Park, which was run by Jeni Alford from DEP and John Dell from the WA Museum. It was attended by an enthusiastic group, who all said they learned a lot. Jeni and John are now putting together some notes to guide people in fauna surveying. These should be available through Ecoplan early in the year.

An introductory Ecoplan training session was held at the Naturalists Club Hall in Nedlands in October and November. It was well attended and about 30 new people joined our ranks, all keen on getting involved in looking after urban bushland.

Perth Environment Week was held by Perth City Council in Forrest Place in November. Thanks to the volunteers who staffed the stall.

The Friends of Ellis Brook Valley kindly shared its Christmas party with other

Ecoplan volunteers. Those who attended enjoyed guided walks through the valley with members of the friends' group, who were able to show the work they have done and share the knowledge they have gained. Thanks very much to John and Margaret Robertson and other group members who put in lots of work to make the evening successful.

When accepting a thank-you present from Ecoplan on behalf of the friends' group, Margaret raised the issue of fires in urban bushland. Bungendore Park had been burnt just days before the Christmas party and Baigup wetland in Bayswater was also burnt. There are more details on the fires further on in the newsletter including an article by Margaret in which she raises her concerns.

Margaret is concerned about the type of media coverage given to bushfires, including the way the arsonists responsible are given publicity, which she feels probably adds to the thrills they get from lighting fires. She called for more attention to be given to the damage fire can do in the bush and the loss of habitat that it causes and suggested that people try to get articles in their local papers about fire. If anyone wants help with this, the Department of Environmental Protection's media liaison people are happy to provide assistance. Contact Margo or Jill at DEP for details.

To end on a brighter note, well done to the Bungendore Park Management Committee and Brett Tizard from the Armadale Settlers' Common Advisory Committee for winning John Tonkin Greening Awards. (See front page article) These prestigious awards are worthy recognition of the hard work put in by Brett and the committee. Well done!

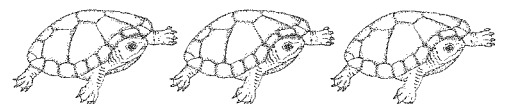
## Looking after Perth's



Ecoplan's Brett Tizard (left) talks to Dario Nardi at the Perth Environment Week Ecoplan display.

## Autumn edition

The deadline for the autumn edition is Friday 17 March 1995. Please send contributions to the Editor, Ecoplan News, Department of Environmental Protection, 141 St George's Terrace, Perth WA 6000. Fax: (09) 322 1598. For information phone (09) 222 7051.



# Money money money

Groups interested in funding had best act quick. The following granting bodies are currently calling for funding applications from community groups:

## **Gordon Reid Foundation for Conservation**

The Gordon Reid Foundation for Conservation is calling for applications for its next funding round. The amount available through the small grants has been increased to \$5000. Details are available from Michael Crouch on 257 2571. Applications close Friday 3 February.

## **Minister for the Environment**

Grants generally range from \$500 to \$5000 although applications outside these limits will be considered. Funds will be available for materials and machinery hire and wages may make up 50 per cent of the project cost. Applications close Tuesday 31 January 1995. Details and applications are available from the Minister's office: Hon Kevin Minson MLA, Minister for the Environment, 12th Floor, Dumas House, 2 Havelock Street WEST PERTH WA 6005. Phone: 321 2222 Fax: 322 5149

## **National Landcare Program (NLP)**

Has two funding options currently available:

### **• Commonwealth/State component**

Among the specific objectives of the Commonwealth/State component is promoting partnerships between the community, industry and government in the management of natural resources.

Details are available from:

John Glauert, Department of Agriculture — Phone: 368 3475 Fax: 368 3946

Cheryl Leyland, Water Authority — Phone: 420 2596 Fax: 420 3174

Robert Atkins, Waterways Commission — Phone 327 9777 Fax: 327 9770

John Bartle, Department of CALM — 334 0321 Fax: 334 0327

Application forms are available from the Coordinator, NLP on 368 3475 or 368 3920 and must be lodged with National Landcare Program, Locked Bag No. 3, SOUTH PERTH WA 6151 by Friday 24 February 1995.

### **• Community Grants 1995-96**

This component aims to encourage community groups to responsibly manage their land and water resources and to conserve native plant and animal species in their local area or region. Information about the NLP community grants is available from: Martine Scheltema, Greening WA 481 2144 for revegetation projects; Penny Hussey, CALM 334 0438 for remnant vegetation projects or Jon Glauert 368 3475 for land and water projects. Applications close Friday 10 March 1995.

A seminar on how to apply for landcare grants will be held at Greening WA, 1118 Hay Street, West Perth at 7 pm on Tuesday 14 February 1995.

## **Environmental education and information grants**

(from the Federal Department of Environment, Sport and Territories)

Funding from interested individuals or organisations to encourage innovative education and information projects in areas relevant to the environment portfolio. Programme guidelines and selection criteria can be obtained from: The Director, public relations and education section, Public Affairs Branch, DEST, GPO Box 787, CANBERRA ACT 2601. Phone: (008) 803 772. Fax: (06) 274 1094. Applications close 10 February 1995.

The **Down to Earth Foundation** had its first funding round in October and aims to have two each year from now on. They will be in April and October. Information is available from Down to Earth Foundation, 33 Hope Street, ERMINGTON NSW 2115. Phone: (02) 857 2000 Fax: (02) 858 5721.

**All in all, it seems there's a lot of money around at the moment for groups with projects in mind. If you want help putting together a project proposal or funding application, contact Margo O'Byrne on 222 7054 or Jillian Harris on 222 7051. In particular, we would like to hear from people interested in doing flora and fauna surveying that may be of benefit to the System 6.**

# Saving the Soil

Men of the Trees have just launched an appeal to raise funds to build a proper education facility at its Hazelmere site.

Group spokesperson Monica Duncan said that some classes were currently run in a makeshift hessian classroom and other classes and courses were run at various other venues.

"The purpose built education centre will make it easier for us to provide the best mix of theoretical and practical training," Monica said.

"It will be a venue for seminars to help farmers to improve their farm productivity and profitability. Other community groups will also be able to use it."

Men of the Trees are launching a special raffle to help raise funds for the education centre. If you would like to participate, either by selling or buying tickets, please call 250 1888.

Tax deductible donations can be made payable to 'The Men of the Trees Public Environmental Gift Fund' but unfortunately no tickets can be provided for these donations.

## Looking for a new challenge?

Looking for a new challenge for 1995? Why not have a go at being an Ecoplan regional coordinator?

Regional coordinators provide a link between people working in community groups and those working in the Department of Environmental Protection. They are a focal point for new people coming into Ecoplan and are responsible for rallying the troops in their region to submit information to Ecoplan News.

Regional coordinators meet with each other and Ecoplan staff quarterly, usually over a meal. In between times, numerous telephone calls are made to keep up to date with what is happening.

The regions which coordinators work in are: north-west metropolitan, central metropolitan, south-east metropolitan, south-west metropolitan and the hills region. If you are interested in being the regional coordinator for your region, please contact Margo O'Byrne on 222 7054 or Jillian Harris on 222 7051. People who are already fulfilling these roles are welcome to re-apply.



# Regional reports



## Hills Region

from Robert Watkinson-Slough

This year we have seen EcoPlan foster links between us and similar groups on the coastal plain and scarp. It's an exciting move and we will benefit from the encouragement and sharing. Several people have already commented on how useful Brett Tizard's tour of the Armadale Settlers' Common was last November.

Congratulations to Robin Rudeforth for catalysing the completion of the Shire of Mundaring's management plan for Strettle Road, Glen Forest (M32). A growing group of conservationists have taken her lead to work regularly there this year. The shire is considering using the plan as a model.

Leonie Campbell and Judy Chambers will be leading the Friends of Hudman Reserve (M30) into the new year. Group members will be busy in the shade this summer propagating seed in their nursery, which was funded by the Gordon Reid foundation. Herbie Titelius is leading a group building seats and a bench for the reserve. The bench will be made from a wandoo blown over in this year's strong winds.

Max Hoare and Jenny Johnston with the Hovea/Parkerville groups have given watsonias a hiding this year. They have also used knowledge gained from the APACE course to collect local plant seed and to use it to regenerate the cleared areas.

Brian Marshall from the Parkerville school reserve attended the 1994 Ribbons of Blue presentations. He has started a Ribbons of Blue project which will involve parents in 1995.

I sent out 22 questionnaires on behalf of the Community Environmental Advisory body on how the Shire of Mundaring could promote voluntary conservation in shire bushland. Thank you to the 20 people who replied. The advisory committee will consider the responses in February, then give advice to the shire. I think we can look forward to action by the shire this year.

All in all, we have had a very good year and can be proud of ourselves. I wish everybody another good year in 1995.

## South east region

from Brett Tizard

### Fire devastates bushland

Fire caused a crisis in Bungendore Park and the Wungong Gorge in early

December. It destroyed about 90 per cent of both areas and has led to the closure of Bungendore Park because of the hazards. The fire was deliberately lit in Byford on the southern side of Wungong Gorge and proceeded northwards, creating havoc. Some pockets of bush remain in Bungendore Park and it is with a touch of irony that seed collecting in the reserve will take place in the rehabilitation areas that survived the fire. The Bungendore Park Management Committee are investigating the severity of the destruction and the plan of attack for 1995.

Within a week of this event, five fires were started in the Armadale Settlers' Common at midnight. Luckily there was no wind that night and these fires caused little damage. It looks to be a long dry summer ahead.

### Grant Success Stories

The Armadale Settlers' Common Advisory Committee received more than \$3,000 from the Alcoa Landcare Program for the construction of seed orchards and the Roleystone Dieback Group was granted money to promote dieback protection in its region.

### Ecotourism Focus

The combined meeting of environmental groups in the City of Armadale was held in November with Stev Slavin from CALM Mundaring as the guest speaker. Stev spoke about the latest goings-on in the Hills Forest and provided valuable information about the state of nature based tourism in CALM. He also spoke about how ecotourism can help offset the costs associated with managing urban bushland.

### Gosnells EarthFest

The City of Gosnells held an EarthFest in late November. This event combined all sorts of environmental and associated groups together with workshops on paper-making, solar ovens and many other topics. A great time was had by all and we look forward to a bigger and better event next year.

### Budget Time for Local Government

Any groups wanting money from their local government should jump on the bandwagon NOW. Councils are just about to begin budgeting for 1995/96 — yes the process starts this early, so prepare your budget request and submit it now.

### Management Plan Field Day

A management plan field day was held at the Armadale Settlers' Common recently. The participants were given a Cook's tour of the common with various management issues highlighted. The Armadale Settlers'

Common is currently half-way through its 10-year plan and visitors saw the achievements so far and heard about the work still to come. Fire, parking, trails, rubbish removal, barbecues and involving the public were discussed. The weather was superb and the visit was enjoyed by all.

### Churchmans Bushland Association One Step Closer

A public meeting was held at the Elizabethan Village, Bedforddale, to finalise the constitution for the Churchmans Bushland Association. It is anticipated that this group will be up and running in the new year. Negotiations with DPUD are continuing and the community can expect the reserve to be opened soon.

## North-west Region

### Friends of Yellagonga Regional Park

from Laurie Boylan

The Yellagonga region has been a hive of activity since our AGM in September. Kate Tauss continues as chairperson, generating more and more areas of interest. We welcome Jackie Harvey as our new nursery manager.

Numerous successful busy-bees have attracted good turn-outs from members and other eager helpers. We have been working at the nursery and at sites in the park and adjacent areas, weeding and seed collecting. These gatherings also allow informal exchange of information without set meetings, involving more people in the process.

Through a lot of work and modifications at the nursery, we have met the hygiene standards required for nursery accreditation. This will allow us to propagate stock for community plantings in 1995.

The nursery is starting to fill with newly germinated green shoots. Already 1995 is looking to be a busy year. Lack of rain has already meant high mortality rates among 1994 plantings in the park.

When this year's stocks are planted out, the community nursery is to be relocated. The current site is to be sold and the nursery moved by 30 June 1995. Our thanks to Landcorp for the extended use of the area. We hope to relocate to the Landsdale Farm School pending appropriate approvals and funding.

Our recent "directions workshop" facilitated by DEP was very successful and has put us back on track in some neglected areas. We have realised more effort needs to go into media policy, group



promotion, and involving the broad membership in all activities and interests. Thanks to Margo and Jill for their very professional workshop.

A reference library and herbarium is progressing well and is expected to be in place in the Woodvale Public Library by the end of January 1995. This will become a valuable community resource and should develop peoples knowledge and understanding of Yellagonga Regional Park.

Some members have recently attended workshops with DEP and City of Wanneroo and now plan flora and fauna surveys in park areas.

#### **Friends of Trigg Bushland**

*from Robyn Murphy*

The Trigg Bushland is one of the few larger bushland reserves (122ha) in the metropolitan area. It is a Class "A" Reserve and is on the Register of the National Estate. The bushland is vested in the City of Stirling for the purposes of conservation, passive recreation and education.

The Friends of Trigg Bushland was formed at a public meeting in 1990 following an unsuccessful campaign to prevent the construction of a four lane highway through the reserve. The group is represented on the City of Stirling's Management Advisory Committee for Star Swamp and Trigg Bushland Reserves.

The group conducts monthly guided walks through different parts of the reserve, collect seeds, remove weeds and rubbish and assists with bush regeneration and fire watch schemes. Funding from the Save the Bush Grants Scheme was received to produce a full colour brochure which is available on request.

Members are currently working with the City of Stirling to map geraldton carnation weed in the reserve to facilitate its eradication.

For more information contact Robyn Murphy on 246 3954 or Steve Tulip on 448 0110.

#### **Friends of Star Swamp Bushland Reserve**

*from Christine Curry*

Summer, of course, brings the ever-present threat of bushfire. Residents who live close to the Star Swamp Reserve have been asked to keep an eye out and phone the fire brigade at the first sign of fire. Over the past few years, Star Swamp has been fortunate in not having a large, potentially devastating wildfire through the reserve. However, there have been many small fires, mostly deliberately lit, which could well have burned out huge sections of the bushland if not quickly extinguished.

To finish the year, the Friends had a members' general meeting and slide

evening in November, which was well attended and included a Christmas supper. The final nocturnal walk for 1994 was also in November and was attended by about 30 people. The frogs were out in force for the occasion and the tawny frogmouth made a majestic appearance, much to the delight of those walkers who had come along specifically to see it.

There was no monthly walk in December, but these will get going again on the fourth Saturday in January, leaving from Hope Street, North Beach, at 8.00am.

#### **Quinns Rock Environmental Group**

*from David Wake*

A workshop was held in September to discuss management of Wattle Park, the bushland located at the corner of Mindarie Drive and Starrs Road in Quinns Rocks townsite. A regeneration plan is currently being prepared for the reserve.

The reserve includes 1.16ha of bushland in good condition. It is an important remnant in the local area, protecting native flora and fauna and offering a place to see and appreciate bushland.

Management of the reserve should restore and maintain the integrity of the bush for conservation and community enjoyment.

Weeds are mainly a problem at the edges, where love grass, carnation weed, couch and wild radish occur. Weeds in the bushland include rose pelargonium and wild oats.

Some weeds have been removed by hand and this should continue. In the core of the bushland the Bradley method will be applied. This means working from good areas to areas where there are more weeds, removing weeds and helping the bush come back.

Many of the issues affecting Wattle Park and other bushland areas reflect a lack of awareness of the values of bushland. Community education and participation will help ensure the retention and regeneration of Wattle Park. With its dense stands of summer scented wattle, honey myrtles on outcropping limestone and many birds, lizards and insects Wattle Park is a special part of the local environment worth protecting.

We are surveying remnant bushland west of Wanneroo Road between Burns Beach Road and Pipidinnny Road. This will document some of the local environment and be a contribution to the Perth Environment Project (which is mapping environmental information for metropolitan Perth).

Through the study we will provide information on local bushland. We hope this will raise awareness of the need to conserve and manage what remains. To find out more contact Natalie Reeves on 305 1992 or David Wake on 305 1591.

To find out what wildlife lives in our area, we have started a fauna survey. Ten pit

traps have been established in local reserves and hand collecting has been done in bushland. So far we have recorded nine species of lizard and one snake.

We have also collected some invertebrates including wolf spiders and ants. We have yet to start listing birds and mammals. If you want to help (you don't need to know anything as we're just learning too) get in touch as survey work will continue over summer.

#### **Central Region**

##### **Bayswater Greenwork**

*from Linda Taman*

Many of you may have seen news reports of the severe fire near Garret Road Bridge in late November. The fire burnt all the juncus beds at Baigup Wetland, almost all the 2000 seedlings put in over the past six months and the seed orchard. A patch of melaleuca was saved. The fire opened up the area and we can now see lots of rubbish that was previously hidden in the vegetation. Bayswater Council is supporting a clean-up day are holding from 10am till noon on 8 January 1995. Contact Kirsten Tullis on 271 3549 (H) for more information.

On a brighter note, the management plan for Baigup was launched in November. We are hoping to start a 'friends' group to look after Baigup. It would be an autonomous group but Greenwork would support them. We have funding from the National Landcare Program to help get things going. Greenwork will then concentrate on liaison with council and start looking at other areas, helping the council to write management plans.

##### **Friends of Bennett Brook**

*from Kaye Pearson*

Work is proceeding on collecting the data to provide a total picture of what we have at Bennett Brook, as a first step in preserving it. It is a busy but exciting time.

The friends group has done two lots of in-servicing with Ribbons of Blue to learn how to monitor water. We have started the monitoring and initial indication is that the water quality is pretty good. We have found fresh-water mussels and gilgies.

We have been bird-watching and so far counted about 30 species, including pelicans, black swans and blue fairy wrens. We have money to employ a consultant to do a fauna survey and are working on getting that done.

Bronwen Keighery and Jeni Alford have been out to the area surveying the flora for the System 6 update. Group members have been assisting them.



# What's on



JANUARY 1995

- Sunday 8 10am—noon Clean-up day at Baigup Wetland. Contact Kirsten Tullis on 271 3549 (H) for more information.
- Monday 9 — Thursday 12 and Monday 16 — Friday 20 Daily start time 8am. Australian Trust for Conservation Volunteers landscaping and planting project in the Australian section at the Perth Zoo. No charge. BYO lunch. Call ATCV on 474 3445 for details.
- Saturday 28 8am Friends of Star Swamp nature walk. Meet corner of Castle and Hope streets, North Beach.
- Tuesday 31 Applications close for the Minister for the Environment's conservation grants.

FEBRUARY 1995

- Friday 3 Applications close for funding from the Gordon Reid Foundation for Conservation.
- Friday 10 Applications close for Federal Department of Environment, Sport and Territories environmental education and information grants.
- Tuesday 14 7pm Seminar on writing submission for landcare funding at Greening WA, 1118 Hay Street, West Perth. For details phone Martine Scheltema on 481 2144.

MARCH 1995

- Friday 24 Applications close for National Landcare Program Commonwealth/State grants.
- Saturday 25 8am Friends of Star Swamp nature walk. Meet corner of Castle and Hope streets, North Beach.
- Sunday 5 National Clean-up Day Why not organise an event for your patch?
- Friday 10 Applications close for the National Landcare Program community grants.
- Friday 17 Deadline for contributions to Ecoplan News autumn edition.
- Friday 24 7.30pm Friends of Star Swamp nocturnal walk. Meet corner at Groat St car-park, North Beach.
- Saturday 25 8am Friends of Star Swamp nature walk. Meet corner of Castle and Hope streets, North Beach.

Advertising your coming events in the Ecoplan News *What's On* column can get extra hands on the ground for your working bees and bigger attendances at your talks. Send details to The Editor, Ecoplan News, Department of Environmental Protection, 141 St George's Terrace, Perth WA 6000. Deadline for the autumn edition is Friday 17 March 1995.

## Looking at landscape



Ecoplan volunteers learnt some of the basics about assessing landscape quality in a workshop held in John Forrest National Park in early December.

Tara Cherrie, a Masters candidate at the University of Western Australia, lead people through a questionnaire that formed part of her research.

Tara is looking at how landscape affects people aesthetically. She says the only way to experience aesthetic qualities is to be there looking, hearing, smelling and touching.

After her Masters thesis is finished, Tara hopes to write a guide-book to explain to people how to assess their own patch of bush.

For further information on aesthetic assessment contact Tara on 380 2651 (work) or 382 3259 (home).



# A burning issue

In response to recent media coverage of bushfires, MARGARET ROBERTSON, chairperson of Friends of Ellis Brook Valley (Inc), shares her personal views on the topic.

How many times this year have we seen reports of "yet another bushfire", and been annoyed? Why do you think we get so annoyed?

Is it the feeling of helplessness at stopping bushfires, or is it:

- the needless loss of wildlife
- the destruction of habitat
- the destruction of an ecosystem
- the loss of years of work at a site
- the time, energy and money we, as volunteers, have put into rehabilitation only to be lost in one day.

All the above, and more, are emotions as conservationists feel when the media report another bushfire.

But how many times have we seen, in the printed or electronic media, any of the above mentioned. Never is a fairly accurate guess. The media, and the reporting of bushfires, is where we as conservationists need to be focusing some of our energies to stop some of the emotive reporting of bushfires.

Bushfires are big news. We hear how many fire units were needed to fight the blaze, how many hours, days or weeks the blaze burnt, how many hectares were burnt out. We get to view or read about hot, exhausted, sometimes injured, firefighters, home-owners being evacuated, home-owners watching their homes burn to the ground, distressed horses or other stock being saved, and a reporter either in a helicopter or on the ground interviewing someone.

Then, we hear that "there was no property lost".

If you were an arsonist, whose main pleasure was waiting for summer so you could have the power to control so many resources, wouldn't you just revel in the coverage you were getting?

While not denying the importance and public interest of these things, there are other concerns that seem to be forgotten. I believe it is time the media focused on the havoc these fires are causing to our environment and destruction of ecosystems within the area. Some mention of the hundreds of volunteers whose lives are affected by these bushfires wouldn't go amiss either.

How many of us have been directly affected by a fire — I can put my hand up. My area of interest is Ellis Brook Valley Reserve. About two years ago, we had an environmental vandal set 10 fires by delayed time devices. The memory of dead and dying wildlife, and the loss of hundreds of hours work, incinerated hatchlings and dead possums in trees will be with me forever.

When Ellis Brook Valley Reserve went up, what did the media want to see? An emotive woman (me) crying on screen. For what — well they didn't really ask me that, but the more tears the better, it was newsworthy, especially with the fire raging in the background, lots of smoke, flames, volunteer firefighters being overworked, and the police blocking off the road. That made all the commercial stations that evening.

That fire was still burning nine days later. We lost 900 hectares. There was never a mention of that by any media outlet.

In the last week, Bungendore Park has been lost to fire. Baigup Reserve has been lost to fire. Every day I visit Ellis Brook Valley just hoping that it will, this year be spared.

## Banksia awards

The Banksia Environmental Foundation has launched the Environmental Education Award for schools throughout Australia, urging classes or entire schools to take environmental action in their local community.

The award encourages students to develop an environmental project in their school or community, either to make an impact on the environment or to create awareness about environmental issues. Students choose their own project, which could be running a recycling programme, a clean up campaign or starting a group in their school or community.

The award is sponsored by Thorn EMI Rental Australia. The national winner will be announced on World Environment Day. Details and a Banksia Environmental Education Award Kit are available from Thorn EMI Rental Australia on (02) 323 3000.



# Ecoplan contacts

## □ Contact numbers:

Ecoplan community involvement co-ordinator

Margo O'Byrne ☎ 222 7054

Jill Harris ☎ 222 7051

Conservation Council of WA

Urban Bushland co-ordinator

Joan Payne ☎ 397 6380

WA Conservation Council

79 Stirling Street

PERTH ☎ 220 0652

Environment Centre of WA

587 Wellington Street

PERTH ☎ 321 5942

Greening Western Australia

1118 Hay Street

WEST PERTH ☎ 481 2144

APACE

1 Johannah Street

NORTH FREMANTLE ☎ 336 1262

Volunteer Centre of WA

79 Stirling Street

PERTH ☎ 220 0676

Community Skills Training Centre

227 Stubbs Terrace

SHENTON PARK 6008

## □ Ecoplan community contacts:

**South-East Region**

Brett Tizard ☎ 497 4038

**Central-South Region**

Carina Calzoni ☎ 339 6205

**North-West Region**

Fay Mumme ☎ 401 2678

**Central Region**

Linda Taman ☎ 370 1213 (w)

**Eastern Hills Region**

Robert Watkinson-Slough ☎ 572 1489

# Water weed threatens Canning River

A large water hyacinth infestation in wetlands next to Wungong Brook could spread into the Canning River system, according to Agricultural Protection Board district officer John Morton.

Water hyacinth is a major water weed that comes from the Amazon Basin.

"Water hyacinth can double its bulk every 10 days over summer," John said.

"It spreads over the entire water surface and its leaves suck up and evaporate vast amounts of water.

"Left to itself water hyacinth would lower river levels, prevent boating and swimming in the river and provide a perfect breeding ground for mosquitoes."

But all is not lost, according to John. He said the infestation had been found in time and, although it spread last winter due to flooding, it had not entered the river system.

"Local landholders are doing a good job of identifying and destroying plants on private land and Armadale City Council is planning to control the weed on its land."

The origin of the infestation is not known but APB staff suspect surplus plants were dumped from a fish tank or aquarium after it outgrew its original space.

In the 1950s large infestations of water hyacinth covered Lake Monger and Lake Goollelal but both lakes have been cleared by spraying and monitoring over many years.



*APB district officer John Morton examines water hyacinth at West Armadale*

## System 6 update

*As reported in the last issue of Ecoplan News, the recommendations for System 6 and the Swan Coastal Plain portion of System 1 are to be updated. Ecoplan News will provide information on what is happening and how you can get involved.*

Work to date has focussed on getting across-government support and developing an agreed work plan for the update.

Field studies identifying the floristic communities in existing System 6 areas are underway. The first stage of this work is now completed.

The next phase of the update will be establishing criteria with which to identify and assess areas to be considered for addition to the System recommendations.

The criteria will be published around autumn and seminars will be held to inform people about them. Members of the public will then be able to nominate areas they think meet the criteria and should be considered for inclusion in System 6.

There will be opportunities for public involvement at several stages throughout the programme, including floristic work this year. Details will be released later but in the interim, anyone interested in doing flora or fauna work in their areas could bear in mind that they may be able to provide useful background data for the System 6 update.

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Department of Environmental Protection  
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