



Perth's Bushplan released

The long-awaited Government strategic plan for the conservation of regionally significant bushland in Perth was released in November 1998 by Planning Minister Graham Kierath and Environment Minister Cheryl Edwardes.

At a cost of \$100 million, *Perth's Bushplan* aims to protect 52,200 hectares of Perth's bushland on 285 sites in a 10 year implementation plan. It aims to conserve at least 10 per cent of the 26 original vegetation types on the Swan Coastal Plain section of Perth.

Bushplan brings together bushland in the existing regional open space areas, and the System Six bushland reserve recommendations released in 1983. An estimated 19,000 hectares of bushland that currently has no protection is recommended for conservation under *Bushplan*.

Mr Kierath said that *Bushplan* provided for a little piece of Kings Park in everyone's backyard and it would give more certainty to conservationists and developers.

Bushplan is about getting the balance right between the commercial requirements of developers and the need

for Perth families to have adequate access to bushland," he said.

The plan was welcomed by bushland conservation group representatives who attended the launch. Generally group members commented that they were very pleased with the plan's release, they wanted to ensure interim protection for bushlands included in the plan and they wanted to see the plan implemented swiftly and in its entirety.

Angela Carr, president of the City of South Perth Environment Association (COSPEA) and the Urban Bushland Council said *Bushplan* represented a magnificent effort and she was pleased with the huge amount of work that had gone into it.

"It has been at least 25 years in the making and community aspirations are being recognised," she said.

"*Bushplan* also recognises Perth's position as the biodiversity capital of Australia. These bushlands are on our doorstep and an asset for everyone."

The Conservation Council of WA's urban bushland spokesperson Joan Payne said it was the last opportunity to retrieve many important bushlands and

threatened species. She also said that overall the standard of work in the plan was very good.

Wildflower Society of WA president, Brian Moyle, added there had been so much time, effort and emotional energy vested in *Bushplan* from a variety of people, particularly from the Department of Environmental Protection, the Ministry for Planning and the community.

James Duggie, Friends of Shenton Bushland deputy convenor and Wildflower Society campaign co-ordinator, said that it would have been easier to save important areas like Shenton Bushland if *Bushplan* had been in place earlier.

"Shenton Bushland was saved by community effort. Its inclusion in this plan confirms its enormous value," he said.

Mr Duggie also mentioned there was a real need for introducing a bushland conservation zone in planning mechanisms like the Metropolitan Regional Scheme and Town Planning Schemes.

"We should be able to reserve bushland specifically for the purposes of conservation, whereas at the moment it is lumped into 'Parks and Recreation'. It is a pity that these changes were not a part of *Bushplan*."

Bushland groups and others will be busy looking at the finer details of *Perth's Bushplan* during the four month submission period which closes on 26 March 1999. It is hoped that the plan will be endorsed by cabinet in mid-1999.

To find out more about *Bushplan*-


Call the *Bushplan* office on 1800 626 477;


Email to pbp@planning.wa.gov.au; or


Take a look at the Ministry for Planning website at <http://www.wa.gov.au/planning>





Friends of Shenton Bushland Janice Marshall, Department of Environmental Protection botanist Bronwen Keighery and Urban Bushland Council's Angela Carr at the Perth's *Bushplan* launch.

 Seasons greetings to all Ecoplan News readers. I hope your Christmas was a happy one and the New Year brings the fulfilment of dreams.


 Many thanks to everyone involved in the various activities over the past year. The really big news for all involved in looking after urban bushland is of course the release of Perth's Bushplan. Friends of Shenton Bushland played host to the launch and it was lovely to walk around the bushland and see the achievements of ongoing work in the area. Well done to all the hard working members of the group.

 Congratulations to all involved in the very successful Urban Bushland Conference held in October. Those who attended were from a wide range of community groups, local and state government agencies. Ecoplan was pleased to be able to sponsor attendance at the conference for 20 members of community conservation groups. We look forward to the proceedings which will give us an excellent resource collection.

 Thanks to all who attended the Project Management workshop held in conjunction with Bushcare Support in November. Our special thanks to Janette Huston, Peter Murray, Bob Goodale and to Anna-Marie Penna for her presentation and assistance with organisation. This was a very useful seminar and we will look to repeating it again if there is enough interest.

 We had a wonderful evening in late November with the Bennett Brook Catchment group for the Ecoplan end-of-year wind up. Many thanks to Linda Taman and Sara Winter for their efforts in organising the event and to Bob Cooper who shared his considerable knowledge and experience with us. Thanks to Australian Trust for

Conservation Volunteers (ATCV) for providing the barbeque and to Jon Elder for his work as a chef. Visits by the Rainbow Bee Eaters were an added bonus.

 Best wishes to all our readers for the New Year. We look forward to working with you in 1999 on the very important work of caring for our environment.

Congratulations Bernhard!

Toward the end of 1998, Bernhard Bischoff won the individual category in the Greening the South West Awards for his efforts campaigning and caring for remnant bushland in Bunbury over the last 15 years.

Safety first!

Ecoplan has produced two useful items for bushland groups. A brochure on insurance for bushcare workers, which looks at the insurance options available, and a laminated safety checklist to take into the bush. As well as safety tips, the checklist also has points on what to do if an accident occurs. It's a handy addition to your tool bag! Call Margo if you would like copies of these.

Summer Ecoplan News

Forward your news, activities and regional reports for the spring *Ecoplan News* by 1 March, 1999. Please keep your regional reports under 250 words. Thanks to all contributors! You can write, fax or email Margo (see Ecoplan Contacts) or write to the following address.

Write to:

Ecoplan
Department of Environmental Protection
Westralia Square
141 St Georges Tee
PERTH WA 6000
Telephone: Switchboard 9222 7000

walk trail in a national park, tracking and monitoring native animals and caring for remnant bushland. For example, a hard-working group of bush rangers from Duncraig Senior High School lent a hand weeding in Kings Park during the launch of Weedbuster Week last October.

Non-school groups can also lead bush ranger groups. If you're interested in the program or want to suggest an activity for bush rangers to tackle call Bronwen Goble on 9334 0333.

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Newsletter compiled by
Cathy Drake

Young bush rangers

The Department of Conservation and Land Management invites young people aged 13 to 17 years to participate in their Bush Ranger program.

Ranger units meet regularly at school to undertake training and chart the progress of various conservation projects. Examples of projects that rangers could become involved in include establishing a native garden at school, maintaining a

1999 Bushland Care Workdays

Expressions of interest are sought from groups wishing to take part in the Bushland Care Workdays program sponsored by Ecoplan, the Australian Trust for Conservation Volunteers (ATCV) and AlintaGas.

The purpose of these workdays is to provide community conservation groups with a 'helping hand' on a nominated day, for tasks which may be too large or involved for a small band of regular workers.

Through sponsorship from AlintaGas, we have been able to engage the help of the very willing and able volunteers from the ATCV to work alongside community groups to undertake a specified task.

These days are also an opportunity to gain publicity for your project and to attract new volunteers from the area through media statements or letter box drops. AlintaGas kindly provides a barbecue lunch for volunteers on the day.

Groups who wish to participate need to complete an expression of interest form and return it to Margo O'Byrne at Ecoplan by 12 February 1999.

Green Corps team work

The Australian Trust for Conservation Volunteers (ATCV) manage the Commonwealth Government Green Corps program.

Green Corps provides young people, aged 17-20 years, with the opportunities to contribute to important conservation projects whilst gaining practical skills and accredited on-the-job training. They also receive a training allowance.

The 26 week training programs include six weeks of accredited study (first aid, occupational health and safety, landcare and environmental concepts), a 14 week major project, four weeks on minor projects and two weeks community service. Projects typically include activities like planting, weeding and fencing.

Community groups are invited to apply for assistance from Green Corps teams as part of minor or major projects. Minor projects can be of one week duration and are a great way for groups to receive on-ground assistance. Community groups need to provide specified tools, materials, technical support, planning and accommodation, if overnight stays are required. Green Corps teams consist of 10 trainees and a supervisor. Transport for the team is provided.

Econotes

Noticing our native grasses

Many of us are used to seeing grasses as unwanted invaders. Vast swaths of introduced grasses, like veldt grass or wild oats, taking over understorey in woodlands mean that the bushland is degraded.

However, there are many native grasses that play important roles in bushland ecology and we must be careful that we do not accidentally remove these when we are trying to rid the bushland of unwanted introduced grasses.

Annual native grasses, such as *Stipa compressa*, colonize quickly after fire and other disturbances and can form grassy fields after a fire. This is a natural stage in succession and not to be confused with the take-over by introduced grasses after disturbances.

According to Kings Park horticulturalist, Bob Dixon, many native grasses are easy to grow from seed and attractive in gardens, but very much under-recognised and under-utilised. In bushland, grasses can be important food sources for animals like kangaroos, and grass seeds are a food source for seed-eating birds.

About 400 native and 200 introduced grasses (all in the Poaceae family) are found in WA. Many genera include both native species and introduced species from Europe, Africa and Asia.

The most common native grasses in Perth bushlands are foxtail mulga grass (*Neurachne alopecuroidea*), wallaby grass (*Austrodanthonia caespitosa*), speargrasses (*Austrostipa*) and spinifexes (found near the coast).

A free booklet which describes many native and introduced grasses commonly found in the South West of WA is available by calling Stephen Gourley (Publications Department, Agriculture WA) on 9368 3729, or by emailing him on sgourley@agric.wa.gov.au. The taxonomy is a little out of date, but this is still a very useful reference:

Paterson JG (1992) *Description and Key to the Grasses in South-western Australia* Department of Agriculture Bulletin 4210.

Other useful references

Bennett EM and Dundas PJ (1988) *The Bushland Plants of Kings Park* Kings Park and Botanic Garden, WA.

Hussey BMJ, Keighery GJ, Cousens RD, Dodd J and Lloyd S (1997) *Western Weeds: A Guide to the Weeds of Western Australia*, published by the Plant Protection Society of WA. (If a grass is not in this book, it's native.)

Further information

Call Bob Dixon at Kings Park and Botanic Gardens on 9480 3628 or Land for Wildlife Officer, Avril Baxter (CALM Narrogin) on 08 9881 1444 for further information on grasses. Land For Wildlife's Penny Hussey is happy to lead grass identification walks. The best time for identifying natives is October to November (over summer it is hard to identify species) and the best time for exotic grasses is August to September. Call Penny on 9334 0530.

Applications for help on small community projects are ongoing, but applicants will need to co-ordinate projects according to when teams are available. The closing date for applications for assistance with major projects is 22 February. These projects begin from late June 1999.

If you would like to discuss a potential project or are interested in joining the program as a trainee call Ken Beasley from ATCV on 9336 6911 or email perth@atcv.com.au

Support from Perth people

A new conservation group, Friends of the Kimberley, has formed to provide Perth support to Kimberley conservation groups. If you want to find out more call Sally Madden on 9220 0669 or Finn Pedersen on 0417 177 454. Margaret Lewington on 9334 0587.

Central Region

South Perth bushlands

by John Feldman

Members of the City of South Perth Environment Association (COSPEA) have been busy during spring removing rubbish and weeding in several reserves. Weeding was mostly by hand removal, with the occasional use of herbicide (glyphosate) on couch grass and Guildford grass.

Weeds have been removed from around both naturally regenerated and planted seedlings at Milyu Nature Reserve, Davilak Reserve, Koonawarra Primary School and Goss Avenue bushlands. At Davilak Reserve, after 10 members had worked for several hours, a local ward councillor, Lance Rattigan, kindly brought us morning tea during a rest period.

During September, Jan King lead a walk through the Mount Henry Peninsula bushland at Aquinas College in Manning. She talked about the regeneration work near the Canning River foreshore and at the old quarry site. Participants also saw the effect of a recent bush fire and the problem of rabbits inhibiting natural regeneration.

On October 17 interested community members and College personnel attended an inaugural meeting of the Mount Henry Peninsula Preservation Group. Together with COSPEA, this means that there are now two conservation groups operating within the City of South Perth.

Recent funding has resulted in the construction of fencing along the western side of the Koonawarra Primary School and Goss Avenue bushlands. This should reduce the problem of dumped household rubbish, including garden prunings and lawn clippings. Funding has also enabled the provision of a boardwalk and viewing platform at Waterford Reserve. This should allow easy, environmentally sensitive access to the Canning River.

For further information call John on 9368 3739 (w), or 9450 5661 (after 6pm).

Tree tubes and weed trials at Blue Gum

by Marion Watson

Friends of Blue Gum Lake have recently filled 200 Carroll tree tubes at the City of Melville nursery for the second year in succession. The original tube design recommends using tape across the base of the tubes, but we found that the tape left sticky deposits which had to be removed with a solvent. We tried using wet newspaper and some people use a clay plug, but this time we are using a small piece of fly wire or shade cloth. Small plants have been inserted in the tubes, and they should be ready to put in the ground in May 1999.

For the last four years we have been successful in receiving a small grant from the Gordon Reid Foundation for Conservation. This year the money was used to stabilise a sand bank so that an area may be revegetated.

Over the past three months Environmental Weeds Action Network's (EWAN) project officer Kate Brown, in conjunction with the City of Melville bushland maintainer and Friends, has mapped the distribution of the serious weeds including veldt grass, freesia, black flag and *Lachenalia*. Vegetation condition for the entire bushland has also been mapped. Quadrats to monitor the effectiveness of weed control have been put in place and a series of transects have been placed across the reserve to monitor the regeneration of the native plant communities.

There is a continuing problem with local householders dumping garden refuse at the Reserve. In November, we found a white swan in a tree - it was a concrete swan!

During 1998, the City of Melville has asked us to provide a monthly record of volunteer hours. The resulting monthly tally is quite impressive.

For further information call Marion Watson on 9316 1324.

Friends of Shenton Bushland

by Janice Marshall

The Friends of Shenton Bushland were proud that Shenton Bushland was chosen as the site for the *Bushplan* launch. In order to justify our pride the construction of all planned pathways was completed, an entrance sign was installed, rubbish was collected around paths and display material was updated! All of this was achieved thanks to the Nedlands City Council, Lemnos Hospital, the Community Service Work Order program and the Friends.

We are grateful for the support received from EWAN's Kate Brown. While Kate has been educating us on managing weeds, we have been educating her on the vagaries of community group functioning! The discussion that she has stimulated has been very worthwhile and we are learning together. She has also benefited from the computer skills of our own members.

Another project the group has undertaken is testing the effectiveness of revegetation by direct seeding versus planting nursery seedlings. Early results of trials implemented in June and July are unclear. The *Jacksonia fuscicollata* (grey stinkwood) that were planted are thriving, while germination from direct seeding is minimal. The 36 seedlings planted per plot of *Dryandra sessilis* (parrot bush) are yellowing and dying, while an average of 68 plants per plot that germinated are looking good. The *Acacia pulchella* (prickly moses) seedlings have reduced to a third and germination is minimal (an average of four per plot).

Contamination of the soil due to this area having been a rubbish dump is an unknown factor. Prickly moses seedlings planted at four other sites, that weren't specifically part of the trial, are much healthier, though parrot bush, also planted not as part of the trial elsewhere in the bushland, appear under stress. Results from our trials will be clearer a few years down the track.

For further information call Janice on 9384 9634.

Wildflower glory attracts attention

by Trish Hewson, secretary of Friends of Hollywood Reserve

On 19 and 20 September 1998 Claire Welsh's beautiful wildflower garden at 2 Boronia Ave, Nedlands was open to the public as part of the Open Garden Scheme. Claire, the Friends convener, invited the Friends to serve refreshments to visitors as a fundraiser. Her garden is across the road from the Hollywood Reserve, so Friends also acted as guides to show interested visitors the profusion of wildflowers in the Reserve. The Reserve is a relatively small 6.5 hectare patch of bushland divided into distinctly the northern and southern section.

It was a really successful weekend. Between 200 and 300 people visited the Reserve. They came from all over the State and overseas and were delighted with what they saw. The weather was cool, but sunny, and chairs and tables were set up under some large trees.

The Reserve was at it's best! More than 100 plants were in flower including donkey, cowslip and pink fairy orchids. A list of the flowering plants, a brochure on the history of the Reserve and a brochure produced by local school children were available. Birdwatchers were delighted to see a pair of frogmouths and a pair of boobook owls.

Many visitors vowed to return to the Reserve and we have noticed an increase in walkers since. Now we just need to encourage some of them to become Friends and help us maintain the bushland.

For further information call Trish on 9386 4476.

Queens Park bushland

by Gill Brennan

The Friends group was formed six years ago when a large area of bushland in the Queens Park Regional Recreational Area was being threatened by a sporting ground development. This recreational area is bounded by Luyer Street, Maniana Road, Welshpool Road, Station Street, Wharf Street and Gibbs Street in Queens Park / East Cannington. There is already housing and a cleared soccer area in some parts of it.

There is also what the council calls the 'ecological area' which is nine hectares of banksia woodland, with some jarrah and melaleuca, bounded by Luyer and Station streets and Welshpool Roads. It is very important regional bushland and contains a priority one rare plant species. It has been fenced, and Friends and workers on community service work orders have been busy removing weeds and rubbish.

An additional fine stand of banksia with good understorey, including orchids, will be fenced soon with the help of a \$5000 grant from the Gordon Reid Foundation for Conservation. The City of Canning will also be helping to fund the fencing.

We have had very good support from Mason Ward Councillors and council staff. We are grateful for support from Judith Watson, Eric Ripper, the Conservation Council, particularly Joan Payne, and the Urban Bushland Council (of which we are founding members). We have also been fortunate to receive good coverage in the local paper.

We are a small, but very enthusiastic group. Weeding takes place most Sundays from 7.30am, organised by Sian Mawson. Sian also grows plants from seeds she collects in the bushland and plants the seedlings back in the bushland. New members and helpers are welcome.

For further information on the weeding activities contact Sian on 9458 3614. For information about the Friends group call Gill on 9451 7357.

Coolbinia Primary School bushland

by Jennifer Hawkes, Wildflower Society and Wetlands Action Group Stirling (WAGS)

At assembly on 13 November, the Wildflower Society of WA presented Coolbinia Primary School pupils and staff with a report (which includes historical and ecological information) and a herbarium for their 2.1 hectares of bushland. The Society received support for the project from a Bushcare Natural Heritage Trust grant, the Department of Conservation and Land Management volunteer program and Ecoplan.

The bushland is mainly typical jarrah/banksia woodland with an understorey that has maintained its integrity despite weed invasion at the perimeter and peripheral plantings of species not native to the area. The average number of species collected in the three 10m x 10m quadrats was 44, including an average of nine weed species.

In the past, this kind of bushland supported large coastal jarrahs and according to the memory of the second headmaster of the school, one such jarrah had a 4.5 metre diameter base.

The area to the north-east of the woodland was once an ephemeral wetland. This area is the most disturbed. There are quite a few marri trees and a few *Melaleuca preissiana* remaining. A transition zone connecting the two vegetation types belongs to the Sir David Brand Centre.

The school has received a grant from Greening WA to fence the jarrah/banksia area and allow for passive recreation. Tree weeds and bridal creeper are being removed by the Australian Trust for Conservation Volunteers.

The children at the assembly were amazed to know that there was a vegetation type on their doorstep that originated about one hundred million years ago. It is now receiving the care it so well deserves.

For further information or a copy of the report call Jennifer on 9448 0053.

South East Region

The Greater Brixton Street Wetlands

notes from Janice Marshall

Brixton Street Wetlands in Kenwick are linked to a larger area of bushland which extends north-east to Welshpool Road and includes Yule Brook Reserve. It has mixed vesting and is the best and largest area of Pinjarra Plain bushland remaining in Perth. Friends of Brixton Street Wetlands received a World Wide Fund for Nature grant to draw up management guidelines for the entire area, referred to as the Greater Brixton Street Wetlands.

Speakers at a workshop held on 7 November at Maddington Community Centre talked about flora and fauna and management issues. Bronwen Keighery spoke about the flora, Murdoch University's Jenny Davis talked about invertebrates, Clive Napier, president of Birds Australia, spoke about birds and John Dell from the WA Museum talked about other fauna of the area. All of these speakers focused on the inter-relationships of the plants and animals. Dr. Bill Lonergan from UWA gave an overview of the research done at the Greater Brixton Street Wetlands. Anna Napier from the Main Roads Department talked about plans to put in a fauna tunnel under Brixton Street for bandicoots and other animals which will be affected by the high embankments associated with the new road developments. David Nunn from the Ministry for Planning explained the tenure and planning controls in the area.

Friends of Brixton Street Wetlands, Wildflower Society representatives, Ecoplan's Margo O'Byrne and Peter Bothwell from Westrail were among those who attended. The workshop concluded with a discussion on management guidelines. Janice Marshall is writing a report from the discussions.

For further information on the Friends of Brixton Street Wetlands call Regina on 9459 2964, or on the Greater Brixton Street Wetlands report call Janice on 9384 9634.

South West Region

Environment Centre gets new building

On 11 August the Rockingham Regional Environment Centre acquired a new lecture theatre with some furniture and equipment. The building was transported from Tomato Lake in Kewdale. The Environment Centre is on Safety Bay Road, Rockingham, opposite Lake Richmond. The Naturalists' Club was happy to see the building put to regular use again. The first lesson took place in the building just days after its arrival when the Rockingham Family School attended a session on wetlands.

The Centre has also received a grant from the Alternative Energy Development Board to set up renewable energy systems. Work has been commissioned on this project.

Volunteers are needed to help out at the Centre. Call the volunteer co-ordinator Jane Davie on 9527 5806. A group meet fortnightly to discuss the permaculture garden. Call Jodie on 9439 4493 if you are interested. The lecture theatre is available for group meetings at a cost of \$20 per meeting.

An environment festival is planned for 20 February with lots of environmental activities and displays (see the *What's On* section for further details). There will be much to see and do, so come along.

For further information call Ann or Bob Goodale on 9527 4289.

Hills Region

North Darlington Reserves

by Judy and Doug Love

The Friends of North Darlington Reserves have been beavering away ever since a severe fire in 1991 revealed that the reserves just south of Bilgoman Pool on the Great Eastern Highway had been a rubbish dump, probably since the 1920s. Friends, community service work order people, Helena Valley Senior High School students and passing bush walkers helped remove rubbish, including car bodies, from the reserves. Two Mundaring Shire trucks were kept busy carting away rubbish over a whole day.

We don't want our lovely reserves to be used as rubbish dumps or trail bikes runs again. The Friends have been planting every year in the reserve since 1992 and we formalised our group in 1997. We have had lots of support from the Hills Region groups and from Liz Western at the Shire.

We have been heartened to receive a grant from the Gordon Reid Foundation for Conservation of \$950 to buy a 450 litre fibreglass gravity-fed water tank which will remain permanently mounted on a donated trailer and enable us to six summer waterings of our plantings. Watering, which was done by hand carting, will now be much more efficient and plants some distance from the road can be reached. We had some losses from our 1997 planting and hope there is a better success rate this summer. This grant also covers the cost of a 100-litre herbicide spray unit which will be used immediately to combat Paterson's curse.

We are waiting to see if we have been successful in another grant application for funds to help rehabilitate and revegetate the abandoned tourist bay opposite Bilgoman Pool's car park.

For further information call Judy or Doug on 9299 6989.

A cool spring in the eastern hills

by Jenny Johnson

A cool October and November enabled many groups to extend bushcare activities far beyond the usual cut-off date. This bonus resulted in much needed weed control measures being carried out and local species gaining dominance over exotic intruders. Removing seed stalks from treated and untreated *watsonia* is one of our prime targets for the cooler days during the summer. Seed collectors will don floppy hats and slop on sunscreen as they get ready to harvest seed for next winter's planting.

The Urban Bushland Council's conference on *Managing Our Bushland* in October was an opportunity for Dr Alan Pilgrim to report on the formation of the Environmental Advisory Committee (EAC) and how it has influenced policies in Mundaring Shire. Jenny Johnson recounted how the Hovea Residents and Ratepayers Association successfully overcame *watsonia* on the bridle trail in Hovea. Mick McCarthy discussed the Friends of Reserves Group manual, a joint effort by the East Metropolitan Regional Council and the Mundaring Shire, which will assist community groups working in Shire reserves.

In November the EAC invited Mundaring Shire councillors and staff on a day's bus tour of the environmental successes and problems in the district and the great contributions made by community groups in bushland care and rehabilitation. Sites were visited from Wooroloo to Hovea.

Local groups and individuals are taking advantage of the many free or minimal cost advisory services being offered by organisations and agencies. Activities such as plant inventories, management plan assistance, seed collecting workshops, dieback workshops, grass

identifying and streamlining are among the services and assistance we have enjoyed. There is a lot of help out there and we have benefited so much from sharing all the good tips we've gained.

Planning is underway for 15 projects in Jane Brook Catchment. Groups involved will share in \$92,000 from an NHT grant.

For further information call Jenny on 9295 4467.

Bunbury Region

Bunbury News

by Carolyn Switzer

Twenty six kilometres of the Preston River from Boyanup to Bunbury was surveyed by community volunteers toward the end of 1998.

"An overall rating of the condition of the river foreshores would be six out of 10," said Rae McPherson, who organised the survey on behalf of the Leschenault Catchment Co-ordinating Group and is producing a report for the community on the survey.

"There were small pockets of relatively undisturbed bush (given an A rating) and some patches where the river was little more than a drain with no vegetation and eroding banks (rated D), but by and large the rest of the river was evenly divided between B (degraded with weed infestation) and C (erosion prone) ratings," Rae said.

The Leschenault Catchment Co-ordinating Group has received NHT funding to initiate a long term bush management project in the Harvey, Dardanup and Donnybrook-Balingup Shires. This project will employ a person part-time to develop bush plans and establish seed orchards in each Shire.

Leschenault Community Nursery will be open regularly to volunteer helpers during the peak activity period in December and January. The Water and Rivers Commission, as well as providing the nursery infrastructure, are donating a computer so that the nursery order system can be streamlined and a seed collection database set up.

The nursery has also been granted \$5000 from the Gordon Reid Foundation to aid in producing more sedges and rushes for riverside revegetation. NHT funding has been received to train volunteers across the region (including the Busselton area) in collecting local seeds. Plans are underway for a regional workshop on the topic.

For further information call Carolyn on 08 9721 2531.

From Bernhard Bischoff

Thanks and congratulations to the Bunbury Councillors who after a tough and drawn out debate have handed all of us a fantastic present. They have agreed to add 10 hectares of remnant Tuart Forest, Banksia and Marri woodland, presently zoned residential, to the College Grove section of the Ocean to Preston River Regional Park. This is the east-west link between Bussel Highway and Manea Park. This 1000m long section is now widened to 300m on the forested ridge where a blue and mauve sweetly scented Sun Orchid thrives.

The debate about retaining some of the outstanding Tuart forest and woodland of Southern Tuart-Peppermint community type 25 (Gibson *et al.* 1994) is continuing. The new Town Plan TPS7, which has been in preparation since 1990 still does not include a map showing the extent of the remnant vegetation and does not distinguish between the different types of open space such as sports grounds or remnant bushland reserves. It can be viewed at the Bunbury Council Offices and at Ministry for Planning, Wellington St Perth. Comments are welcome until 4 February.

For more information call Bernhard Bischoff (08) 9791 4113.

Group Profile: The Bennett Brook Catchment Group (BBCG) and Friends Group



BBCG members (from left) Kerri Lockier, Sara Winter, Bevan Carter, Linda Taman, Kaye Pearson and Margaret Jeffries.

The Bennett Brook Catchment Group (BBCG) was formed in 1995 by locals who were passionate about the Brook, and concerned about water quality and the loss of native vegetation.

The Friends formed in 1998 to help with the many activities and learn more about the environment.

Much hard work was rewarded when in August 1998 the Bennett Brook Environment Centre opened as their home base! The transportable building at Lot 75 Lord Street, Caversham was supplied by the Water and Rivers Commission, the land is leased from the Ministry for Planning and the Shire of Swan helped with set up costs.

The Catchment

Bennett Brook runs from Whiteman Park into the Swan River at Bassendean. The catchment is 112km². It is mainly urban, but also includes the Malaga industrial area and some small farms, and it's right next to the vineyards of the Swan Valley. There are several areas of good remnant vegetation, particularly with intact overstorey.

The Brook has particular significance to the Swan Valley Nyungah Community, who are based just down the road from the Environmental Centre and are very involved with BBCG. They have established a local plant nursery with funding from Alcoa and Greening WA.

Busy busy busy

BBCG comments on development proposals, encourages activities to reduce nutrients and algal blooms in the Brook, and therefore the Swan River, and encourages activities to enhance wildlife corridors.

Community groups involved in BBCG activities include the Hampton Park Cubs, the 1st Beechboro / West Swan Scouts and the Perth Hyatt Regency Hotel's environmental group, The Hyatt Care Team.

Not only have the innovative Hyatt Team been very busy with planting, they also held a raffle to raise money. The Scouts are building a raft which they will use to remove exotic plants and fish from the Brook. BBCG hope to involve schools in activities in 1999.

In 1998, 5000 trees and 2000 rushes and sedges were planted in Whiteman Park, 3500 plants were planted in Clarrie Small Park, and 3000 were planted in Garden Vale Estate. Also in 1998, a study of native fish habitat, breeding areas and threats was conducted.

A fire management plan has been prepared and a report on the environment, history and management issues in the catchment will be published later this year.

Contacts

Linda Taman (part-time co-ordinator) or Sara Winter (full-time project officer) can be contacted at the Environment Centre on 9377 0444. Meeting and office space and facilities at the Centre can be used by other groups in the catchment. Friends membership is free and includes a quarterly newsletter (funded by Bristle).

Meetings

BBCG meet the third Wednesday of the month at 5pm and the Friends meet the fourth Monday of every month at 7pm.

Some learning opportunities

Caring for your local bushland

Ecoplan run a series of introductory training sessions for people involved or interested in forming a group to care for local bushland. Topics covered include an introduction to the flora and fauna of the area, working with local government and state government, introduction to bush regeneration as well as looking at some practical examples of effective community groups. Courses are run in regional centres twice each year. Call Margo 9222 7052 for details.

Plant survey skills

The Wildflower Society of WA runs this program in the flowering season (July - October). The aim is to help community groups and individuals understand and conserve their bushland by offering support to survey, document and monitor the vegetation and flora of the area. As well as the field survey the program includes plant identification, preparation of field herbaria and written reports. Volunteers work with experienced botanists and this is an excellent way to improve your botanical knowledge. Contact the Wildflower Society on 9383 7979.

Introduction to bush regeneration

These courses are conducted between the months of June and December over either nine-and-a-half days (Saturday afternoon) or four consecutive weekdays. Course tutors are chosen for their expertise in relevant fields such as botany, weed control, plant propagation and project management. Each participant is awarded a certificate on successful completion of the course which includes a take home exam and presentation of a herbarium. Contact APACE 9336 1262.

Seed collecting course

This course consists of one day of theory and two days practical. It covers the correct use, care and maintenance of tools, seed collection best practice, hygiene, legal requirements and obligations, operating guidelines for seedbanks as well as practical methods utilised to process collected seed material. Contact APACE 9336 1262.

What's On



JANUARY

28 December – 9 January
Dune and track rehabilitation near Broke Inlet
D'Entrecasteaux National Park with ATCV. Call 9336 6911.

6 Wednesday
Deadline for submissions to the World Wide Fund for Nature Threatened Species grants. Call Sandra 9387 6444.

6 Wednesday 8pm
Friends of Marmion Marine Park meeting and talk at the Mt Flora Complex, Elvire St, Waterman. Call Lynda 9342 8684. (A touch pool activity will also be organised in January.)

6 Wednesday
Bannister Creek wetland restoration, including weeding, with ATCV. Call 9336 6911.

16 Saturday 7am
Early morning bird walk at Herdsman Lake Wildlife Centre. Call 9387 6079.

16 Saturday 8am
Monthly guided walk with the Friends of Lake Gwelup. Meet at the Scout hall, Huntriss Rd, Karrinyup. Call Betty 9444 5640.

23 Saturday 8am
Friends of Star Swamp monthly nature walk. Meet cnr of Castle and Hopes Sts, North Beach. Call Christine 9447 2983.

25 Monday 7pm
Friends of Bennett Brook Catchment meeting at the Bennett Brook Environment Centre, Lot 75 Lord St, Caversham. All welcome. Call 9377 0444.

30 Saturday 8am
Friends of Trigg Bushland nature walk. Meet at Elliott Rd, Trigg. Call Robyn 9246 3954.

1, 15, 18, 19, & 20 January
Catchments, Corridors and Coasts environmental education professional development for teachers and educators, TAFE and university students. Cost \$99. Late bookings Janette Huston 9574 6039.

31 January – 13 February
Coastal clean-up and dune protection at Doubtful Island Bay, east of Bremer Bay with ATCV. Call 9336 6911.

FEBRUARY

1 Monday – 3 Wednesday
Wetland restoration with ATCV at either Yagan Reserve or Bannister Creek, City of Canning. Call 9336 6911.

3 Wednesday 8pm
Friends of Marmion Marine Park meeting and talk at the Mt Flora Complex, Elvire St, Waterman. Call Lynda 9342 8684.

4 Thursday 7.45pm
Murdoch branch of Wildflower Society meeting and talk by Kings Park Guide, Mack Seale on banksias at Cockburn Wetlands Centre, Hope Rd. Call Diane Matthews 9457 2896.

5 Friday 7.30pm
WA Naturalists' Club meeting and talk at the University Extension Lecture Theatre, Clifton St, Nedlands. Call Alan 9306 1832 or Gordon 9272 1674.

6 Saturday 9am
Spend a morning with 'Ribbons of Blue' looking at the invertebrates that live in Bennett Brook, Bennett Brook Environment Centre, Lot 75 Lord St, Caversham. Bring the family. Call 9377 0444.

6 Saturday 1pm-5pm
City of Cockburn "Growing a Native Garden" workshop for residents of Cockburn. Atwell Community Centre cnr Lombe Gardens & Lydon Blvd, Atwell. Call Paddy Strano 9411 3444.

7 Sunday 4.30pm
Sorrento to Ocean Reef beach walk with Friends of Marmion Marine Park. Meet at the grassed area next to Sorrento Surf Club. Call Lynda 9342 8684.

15 Monday – 26 Friday
Dune protection and restoration in Walpole-Nornalup National Park with ATCV. Call 9336 6911.

20 Saturday 7am
Early morning bird walk at Herdsman Lake Wildlife Centre. Call 9387 6079.

20 Saturday 8am
Monthly guided walk with the Friends of Lake Gwelup. Meet at the Scout hall, Huntriss Rd, Karrinyup. Call Betty 9444 5640.

20 Saturday 2pm
Environmental Weeds Action Network AGM at the Agriculture WA theatre. Call Joanna 9299 6816.

20 Saturday 9am – 5pm & 6.30pm – 10pm
ROCKINGHAM ENVIRONMENT CENTRE FESTIVAL
Rockingham Regional Environment Centre, Safety Bay Rd (opposite Lake Richmond), Shoalwater. Nature trails, local crafts, music, displays on natural history, permaculture, solar cooking, waste minimisation. BBQ, natural history quiz and films in the evening. Call Bob or Ann Goodale 9527 4289.

24 Wednesday 7pm - 9.30pm
Ecoplan /Bushcare Support /Swan Catchment Centre Seminar "How to attract volunteers to your project and how to maintain volunteer commitment". Venue Swan Catchment Centre. Call Margo 9222 7052 or Anna-Marie on 9221 3840.

26 Friday
Closing date for Natural Heritage Trust (NHT) grant applications. Call 1800 198 231.

27 Saturday 8am
Friends of Star Swamp monthly nature walk. Meet cnr of Castle and Hopes Sts, North Beach. Call Christine 9447 2983.

MARCH

LANDCARE MONTH
Activities include the Swan River Education Kit Launch (call Kathleen Broderick 9278 0300.)

1 Monday
Closing date for Trailswest grant

applications. Call Ken Ashman 9387 9700.

5 Friday 7.30pm
WA Naturalists' Club meeting and talk at the University Extension Lecture Theatre, Clifton St, Nedlands. Call Alan 9306 1832 or Gordon 9272 1674.

10 Wednesday 7.30pm
Forum. *Maintaining Biodiversity - Rubbish as habitat?* Australian Association of Bush Regenerators. Kings Park Admin Centre. Call Janice Marshall 9384 9634.

20 Saturday 8am
Monthly guided walk with the Friends of Lake Gwelup. Meet at the Scout hall, Huntriss Rd, Karrinyup. Call Betty 9444 5640.

20 Saturday 7am
Early morning bird walk at Herdsman Lake Wildlife Centre. Call 9387 6079.

26 Friday
Closing date for submissions to *Perth's Bushplan*. Call 1800 626 477.

What's on in the Bunbury region

JANUARY

16 Saturday 10am
Seeding and pot filling busy bee day at the Leschenault Community Nursery, Johnson Rd. Call Shirley (08) 9795 7181.

For further activities, call the Bunbury Naturalists Club (Shirley 08 9795 7181) and the Busselton Naturalists' Club (Bernie 08 9727 2474).

Please send us your activities in the metropolitan and Bunbury areas by 1 March 1999 for Autumn *Ecoplan News*.

Happy summer holidays to all bushland carers and readers. We hope many of you have a restful break from bushcare work under shady trees over summer.

Resources

Want help with your projects and NHT grant?

Metropolitan area National Bushcare Program officer Anna-Marie Penna is available to assist with technical aspects of formulating projects, including revegetation plans and plant species lists, and to clarify any aspects of the Natural Heritage Trust (NHT) application forms.

Anna-Marie is also available to give advice on projects that are not related to NHT and she plans to run a project management course, particularly for those involved in bushcare projects, in late February or early March 1999. If you are interested in this course or would like her advice call her at the Swan Catchment Centre on 9221 3840. NHT grant applications are due by 26 February. Call 1800 198 231 for details.

Peter Nash is helping groups develop projects that address regional priorities in the Swan Catchment as part of Swan-Avon Integrated Catchment Management program (ICM). NHT applications that are endorsed by the Swan-Avon ICM may have an increased likelihood of success as the Commonwealth Government seeks to encourage regional initiatives. If you are interested call Peter at the Catchment Centre on 9221 3840.

River care booklets

The Land and Water Resources Research and Development Corporation (LWRRDC) have produced a useful series of booklets on river care. The topics covered in the seven booklets are managing riparian land, streambank stability, water quality, river ecosystems, land-based ecosystems and managing stock. They are available free by

calling the Department of Primary Industry shop front on 1800 020 157. Mention that they are part of a series called LWRRDC 1997 Vegetation Series numbers 1-7 (guidelines to the management of riparian lands).

The LWRRDC website (www.lwrrdc.gov.au) may also be a useful reference for those involved in river care. (Full copies of the booklets are available on the website if you click on 'publications', then 'commissioned publications').

Friends manual completed

The East Metropolitan Regional Council and the Mundaring Shire have produced a *Friends Group Manual* for groups working in bushland areas vested in the Shire of Mundaring. The manual clarifies the responsibilities between community groups and the Shire to enhance working relationships within the Shire. It also covers topics such as the preparation of workplans and management plans, safety, training, and insurance and liability. The Shire has appointed a part-time bushcare co-ordinator to assist friends groups in accordance with the manual. For further information call Mike McCarthy at the Shire of Mundaring on 9290 6666 (Fridays) or on 0418 934 003.

National Trust listed places

Windows to the Past - Windows to the Future; Forty-six Landscapes Classified by the National Trust is a new booklet published by the Environment Centre of Western Australia and written by Karel Eringa. It contains information on 31 bushland and wetland areas, nine parks and gardens, and six geological features listed by the National

Trust as places of significance in the Perth metropolitan area. Copies are available free by calling 9225 4103, emailing ecwa@inet.net.au or dropping into the Environment Centre, first floor, 10 Pier St, Perth (9.30am - 5pm).

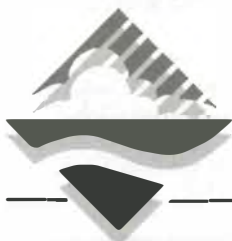
Banksia awards

Banksia Environmental Awards are national awards that recognise and encourage environmental achievement. There are 10 categories including coastal and marine environment, land and waterways management, communications, education and training, innovation, community group and flora and fauna awards. Nominations close on 19 February 1999 and there is a fee for applications. Winners receive a trophy and considerable media coverage. Call the Banksia Environmental Foundation on (03) 9428 6567 for details.

Publications

Edible Wattle Seeds of Southern Australia by BR Maslin, LAJ Thomson, MW McDonald and S Hamilton-Brown was published by CSIRO Publishing and CALM Como in 1998. It identifies 47 wattle species which have potential for cultivation in southern semi-arid Australia and gives botanical profiles and other information for these species.

Guide to Wildflowers of the South Western Australia by Simon Nevill and Nathan McQuoid, was also published toward the end of 1998 by Simon Nevill publications. It has photos of more than 900 wildflowers with peak flowering months for each species, and a range of information on conservation. There are also maps of where to look for wildflowers.



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