

Ecoplan NEWS

Issue 49 Autumn 2004

Includes Djeran and Makuru* in the Nyoongar calendar

FOREST SCIENCE CENTRE
DEPARTMENT OF CONSERVATION
AND LAND MANAGEMENT
WESTERN AUSTRALIA

Double Celebration at Brixton Street

Environment Minister Dr Judy Edwards officially launched the Urban Nature program at the Brixton Street Wetlands on 18 March.

Dr Edwards said it was a great day for conservation.

The Urban Nature program will give significant support to community groups. This very important reserve, Brixton Street wetlands, is being handed over to the Conservation Commission of Western Australia for management by the Department of Conservation and Land Management."

Dr Edwards said CALM's new Urban Nature program was a State Government initiative to meet the growing community interest in managing urban bushland and wetlands.

Long history

The 19ha Brixton Street wetlands were recognised as an important conservation area in the early 1980s. The Wildflower Society, in particular Greg and Bronwen Keighery, surveyed the area and found nearly 320 species of native plants.

This represented 17 per cent of the known flora of the Perth Region in less than .0005 per cent of the area. A very special piece of land! The wetlands contain a number of declared rare flora, priority species and vegetation formations rarely represented in reserves on the coastal plain.

The realisation of these special values prompted a number of groups to campaign to maintain Brixton Street as a conservation area, with the Wildflower Society (Perth branch) and the Waterbird Conservation Group working hard to save the area.

At the time, the land was owned by the State Housing Commission (now the Ministry of Housing) and in the late 1980s a proposal was put forward to develop the wetlands for housing. The proposal was subject to assessment by the Environmental Protection Authority, which recommended



Jeremy Dawkins, Chairperson Western Australian Planning Commission, Keiran McNamara, Executive Director CALM, Dr Judy Edwards, Minister for the Environment, and Urban Nature staff Margo O'Byrne, Lisa Bland and Renee Miles.
Photo: Darren Gillespie

against the development and supported the formation of a nature reserve to include these wetlands.

Friends care for Brixton Street

Regina Drummond, coordinator of the Friends of Brixton Street, was involved from the early days. Negotiations for the transfer of the land were not successful so the reserve remained in limbo for many years. The friends group was formed to take on the reserve's ongoing management.

Many people have contributed years of work to manage the land. There have been group work days (a number in conjunction with Ecoplan) and individual efforts to remove weeds, clean up rubbish and build fences. The Friends have undertaken wildflower walks in spring and publicised the values of the area through displays at shopping centres, libraries and schools.

"Many people have helped us to look after Brixton Street and that makes it all worthwhile," Regina said.

Brixton Street is a Bush Forever site that has been purchased by Western Australian Planning Commission (WAPC) for management by CALM as a conservation area.

The Chairperson of the WAPC, Mr Jeremy Dawkins, on behalf of the Minister for

Planning and Infrastructure, Alannah MacTiernan, spoke of the Commissions ongoing work in purchasing and handing over Bush Forever sites as part of the State Government's commitment to preserve and manage these sites for conservation.

Minister thanks Friends

Dr Edwards praised the extraordinary efforts of the many individuals and conservation groups involved in saving and managing the wetlands.

She noted the commitment of Regina and Trevor Drummond and Nick and Elizabeth Bueters and the friends group. Thanks was also extended to members of the Waterbird Conservation Group, in particular Joan Payne; the Perth branch of the Wildflower Society especially Greg and Bronwen Keighery and Kate Brown; Kris Brooks and Andrew Thomson from the Environmental Weeds Action Network.

Dr Edwards unveiled a plaque thanking the Friends of Brixton Street for their extraordinary efforts in managing the reserve.



Minister for the Environment, Dr Judy Edwards thanks Friends of Brixton Street coordinator Regina Drummond as they jointly unveil a plaque to acknowledge the efforts of the Friends group in managing the bushland. Photo: Darren Gillespie

* Djeran is the time when the weather gets cooler and the winds generally from the south-west. Makuru is cold and wet with westerly gales.



Our cover story tells of the exciting launch of Urban Nature combined with the celebration of the purchase of the Brixton Street wetlands. These two events are for me, personally, the

fulfilment of two long held dreams for better conservation outcomes for bushland. The decision by the EPA not to allow a housing development at Brixton Street was made as Ecoplan was being set up back in 1991. The launch of Urban Nature gives us a great opportunity to extend the Ecoplan program by providing bushland management advice and working with land managers to achieve better outcomes for the bush.

Congratulations to all involved in the fight to save, conserve and manage Brixton Street and to the many groups and individuals who have supported Ecoplan. It has been a long involvement, but once again highlights the amazing dedication of a small group of people who maintained the vision for what could be achieved.

The launch has provided us with an opportunity to develop a program guideline for Urban Nature and to get our web site up and functioning. In future, copies of Ecoplan News will be available on line; please let us know if you would prefer to access an electronic copy. Other information on the Urban Nature web site includes learning opportunities, partnerships, community support and new and existing activities. Access the Urban Nature site through www.naturebase.net/urbannature

The Skills for Nature Conservation pilot program is attracting a great deal of interest. The program is delivering courses to professionals working in natural area management. The first course, *Working with Contractors* attracted more than 40 participants, with large enrolments for other courses. An evaluation of these courses will take place and a report will be produced for our funding body, the Natural Heritage Trust through the Swan Catchment Council. *Working with Nature - Bushland Restoration* workshop will be on 7 May and *Facilitation Skills* in conjunction with CALM will take place in June. Contact Amrit Kendrick at Greening Australia (WA) for further information and registration on 9335 0107.



Want to learn more about caring for the environment?

Skills for Nature Conservation has launched its program for 2004 with a change in focus to directly cater for the needs of new community conservation groups and friends groups.

While many of our regular attendants are quite familiar with the courses, we want to make sure that new members of existing groups and all members of newly formed conservation groups and catchment groups know that they are welcome to attend.

This year we have incorporated five new courses in the SFNC calendar. They include an *Understanding Bushland Fauna*, which will introduce participants to our wonderful animals. A plant identification course *Fantastic Flora*, will be coordinated by the Murdoch branch of the Wildflower Society and participants will have opportunities to work with skilled professional and amateur botanists to learn about the wonders of our outstanding flora. Well-known and highly entertaining instructor, Eric McCrum will give the introductory session on *Understanding Bushland Soils and Plants*. The other two courses in this part of the program will include *Successful Meetings and Getting Started* and *Keeping Your Community Group Going*.

While these courses are targeted at new groups, we understand that some people may like to attend as a 'refresher'. If group members feel they have missed some information, they are welcome to register their interest and attend any of the courses. Another important feature of this year's program will be the Environmental 'Road Show' which will take place on 4 September, during Adult Learners Week.

"We want to give people a chance to see some on ground achievements, as well as join together in a fun day," said Kathryn Clarkson from the Swan Catchment Centre.

"A barbecue lunch will be part of the Road Show and it will be a chance to bring other family members along.

"This will provide an opportunity to have a look at some of the great work being undertaken by the community at bushland reserves and waterways throughout Perth."

For a copy of this year's program, please contact ecoplan@calm.wa.gov.au or phone 9368 4399, or download from the urban nature website. Programs are also available at the Swan Catchment Centre, Greening Australia. To register for community or professional courses ring the Swan Catchment Centre on 9374 3333.

Electronic copies of the calendar and information notes from previous courses are available at www.wrc.wa.gov.au/swanavon/pages/info_sheets.html

Contacts

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Urban Bushland Council

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Perth Biodiversity Project (WALGA)

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Winter Ecoplan News

Forward your news, activities and regional reports for the Winter 2004 Ecoplan News by 1 June, 2004. Please keep your regional reports under 250 words and articles as brief as possible. Please also send us your photos! Fax, email or write to Ecoplan (see Ecoplan contacts above). Thanks to all contributors.

Newsletter compiled and edited by Erin Gisborne.

Sustainable Behavioural Change advocate to visit Perth

An exciting new event will be the visit of Dr Doug McKenzie-Mohr. Doug has worked on a number of programs in Canada and the USA fostering sustainable behavioural change. This work moves the emphasis from simply producing information for environmental awareness and hoping it reaches the target audience, to identifying the barriers which prevent people from undertaking sustainable behaviour. These workshops will provide the opportunity to understand a new way of carrying out environmental education.



At this stage, there are plans for full day workshops on 10, 11 and 14 June 2004. Workshops will be organized around the theme of 'Sustainability Education' and will cost about \$200 for each participant. Venues are still being confirmed.

For further information please contact Anna Heffer on 92780686 or email anna.heffer@environment.wa.gov.au

For further information on Doug's work please visit the site <http://www.cbmsm.com>



Information on Western Australia's unique flora is now more accessible than ever with the recent launch of the new user-friendly FloraBase² website. Originally launched in 1998 as part of CALM's popular NatureBase website, FloraBase² has been refined and extended to incorporate even more useful information about our State's plant life. So next time you need to obtain authoritative data on plants in WA simply visit www.florabase.com

Learning Opportunities

Apace bush regeneration course

The Apace bush regeneration course introduces participants to the fundamental principals of bushland regeneration. The course concentrates on the principals of bush regeneration developed by the Bradley sisters in NSW, but has been modified so that these are relevant to WA. The course includes both theory and practice.

The cost for the course is \$220 and a range of classes have been scheduled during autumn. For further information contact Apace on 9336 1262.

Acid sulphate soils workshop

Significant environmental problems have and will continue to emerge in sensitive areas in the South West unless awareness about acid sulphate soils and their management is raised. Urban development near wetlands and major estuaries, and increased pressure for mineral sands mining mean we need to understand more about acid sulphate soils.

The Swan Catchment Centre is extending an invitation to learn about acid sulphate soils through its free acid sulphate soils workshop which will be held on Friday 30 April between 9am and 4:30pm at the Swan Catchment Centre in Middle Swan.

The workshop will allow key natural resource management groups, landholders, farmers, community, and officers from local and State Government agencies to learn about acid sulphate soils, how to identify them, testing methods and the best means for managing the soils.

Bookings are essential. For more information contact Kathryn Clarkson at the Swan Catchment Centre on 9374 3303 or kathryn.clarkson@environment.wa.gov.au

Funding Opportunities

175th Anniversary - community grants

To mark the 175th Anniversary of the European founding of Western Australia, the Premier has announced a second round of small-scale community grants worth \$300,000.

The purpose of the funds is to promote community involvement in the 175th Anniversary of Western Australia. Grants ranging from \$500 to \$5000 will be awarded to successful applicants. Those wishing to apply for a grant with an environmental focus should consider if their project:

- contributes to the understanding of our natural environment; or
- contributes to the conservation or rehabilitation of a natural environment.

For further information or to download guidelines and applications forms visit www.175anniversary.wa.gov.au Applications must be received by close of business Friday 2 April 2004.



The Swan Alcoa Landcare Program (SALP) provides funds for community groups involved in on-ground revegetation and rehabilitation projects.

The program aims to provide easy access to funding for a broad range of environmental activities within the Swan and Canning catchments.

In the 2004/2005 funding round, \$550,000 is available through the combined sponsorship of Alcoa World Alumina Australia and the Swan River Trust. The next funding round will commence in May 2004. For more information contact the Swan Catchment Council on 9374 3333 or saicc@environment.wa.gov.au

Mitre 10 Junior Landcare Grants Program



Australian youth have the opportunity to make a difference to our environment thanks to the Mitre 10 Junior Landcare Grants Program. The Mitre 10 Junior Landcare Grants Program is a grant scheme open to schools and other youth organisations around Australia.

The program aims to establish a three-way partnership between Landcare, sponsors and the community, by bringing together industry, government agencies, schools and other youth organisations, enabling Australian youth to become involved in environmental projects.

The grant may be used to top up or maintain an existing project that your school/group is currently involved with, or it can be used to fund an entirely new project. Closing dates for applications in 2004 are 20 May, 29 July, and 21 October.

For further information visit www.mitre10.com.au/landcare/grants.asp or www.landcareaustralia.com.au

WA Women's Grants 2003

The WA Government has established a grants program through the Office for Women's Policy, which aims to acknowledge and encourage the participation of women in the community. Grants of up to \$2000 are available for 'one-off' projects. Community organisations, key interest groups and not-for-profit organisations are eligible to apply. For further information contact the Office for Women's Policy on 9264 1900 or wpo@dcd.wa.gov.au

Congratulations!



Winners of the Bessie Rischbieth Conservation Award (L-r) Dr Graham Chittleborough, Rachel Siewert and Andrew Thompson (Photo: Colma Keating)

Congratulations to winners of the 2003 Bessie Rischbieth Conservation Award. Announced in December, the award is a WA Conservation Council initiative and honours recipients for their grass roots activism and sustained conservation work in WA.

This year, there was a three-way tie with Dr Graham Chittleborough, Rachel Siewert and Andrew Thomson receiving the Award. All three have made major contributions to the voluntary conservation movement in WA and have worked tirelessly over the years on a range of environmental causes.

While on the topic of the WA Conservation Council, Rachel Siewert, who directed the Council for 16 years, has handed over the reigns to the very capable Chris Tallentire as she leaves to establish a political career. We wish them both the best of luck in their new endeavours!

Focus on fledglings in flight!

Following up on our last Eco-note (Ecoplan News Summer 2004) regarding the Carnaby's black-cockatoo, we are pleased to inform you of a joint effort undertaken by the Carnaby's Black-Cockatoo Recovery Team. Partners include Birds Australia, CALM and the WA Museum. Together they will track the movements of Carnaby's Black-Cockatoo fledglings over the coming months.



Community members are being asked to keep an eye out for Carnaby's black cockatoo's fledglings with colours marked on their tails. (Reproduced by courtesy of the Western Australian Museum.)

In order for this project to be successful, Birds Australia is relying on members of the public to participate by recording and reporting any sightings of the fledglings. This task is made easier as the fledglings have had their usually white tail panels painted bright red, green, blue, orange or purple for easy identification.

The information Birds Australia requires is:

- the date and time of observation;
- the colour of paint;
- the number of marked birds;
- the number of birds accompanying marked birds;
- the location (be as specific as you can, including details such as the place name, property location number, distance from the closest road intersection, GPS reading if available, distance and direction from nearest town); and
- your contact details.

To report sightings contact the Birds Australia office during office hours (9.30am-12pm weekdays) on 9383 7749 or fax 9387 8412. You may forward any information to the Carnaby's Black-Cockatoo Recovery Project Officer, Leonie McMahon, at ljmcmahon@bigpond.com or post to 71 Oceanic Drive, Floreat, WA 6014. Alternatively contact the CALM Nature Protection Branch on 9334 0292.

Perth Biodiversity Project

By Kate Savage



**PERTH
BIODIVERSITY
PROJECT**

Councils Caring for their Natural Communities



Perth Biodiversity Project Technical Officer, Julia Cullity assists officers from the City of South Perth in assessing a local reserve. (Photo: West Australian Local Government Association)

The Local Government Biodiversity Planning Guidelines for the Perth metropolitan region, prepared as part of the Perth Biodiversity Project, will soon be released. These guidelines will be a significant step forward and provide the basis for local governments to strategically plan for the retention, protection and management of the Perth metropolitan region's biodiversity.

Local government has an important role to play in the conservation of biodiversity through its involvement in the land use planning process and the direct management of many natural areas. The guidelines contain important policies, tools and templates for local governments to prepare local biodiversity strategies.

The Perth Biodiversity Project, an initiative of the Western Australian Local Government Association, promotes the long-term retention, protection and management of natural areas. For further information on the guidelines contact Kate Savage on 9213 2048 or ksavage@walgas.asn.au.

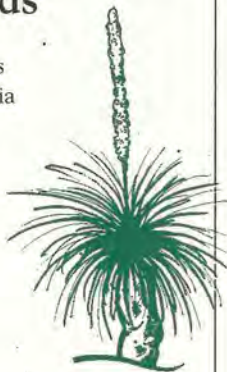
WA Weeds Committee

The Natural Resource Management Council (NRMC) recently sought Expressions of Interest for the appointment of up to seven community and industry representatives to the Western Australian Weeds Committee. This is a new committee, formed as a recommendation of the State Weed Plan. The deadline for nominations was Friday 27 February 2004. The committee members had not been announced by the time ECOPLAN News went to print. Stay tuned for further details in our next edition.

World Environment Day Awards

The United Nations Association Australia (UNAA) is requesting that all nominations for the 2004, World Environment Day Awards be submitted by 12 May 2004. The awards aim to recognise businesses, community groups, individuals, local governments, students and the media whose work serves to protect, manage or restore the environment.

For complete guidelines, entry criteria and nomination forms, visit www.unaavictoria.com.au or email UNAA.VIC@bigpond.com for further information.



Weed mapping using the GPS

Throughout 2003, the Friends of Shenton Bushland experimented with a Global Positioning System (GPS) to assist with the effective management of their bushland. To date, the GPS has been used for:

- developing weed location maps;
- monitoring activities within the bushland; and
- liaising with members and the local council to indicate areas of activity.

Having established the best use of the GPS, the group would like to extend the benefit of its experiences to other bushland groups that may be thinking of using a GPS. In particular, the group may be able to help with setting up computer databases of weed locations or producing maps from GPS data. Likewise, it is also interested in learning from the experiences of other groups that have already been using a GPS.

For further information or advice, contact Dani on 9381 3470 or bojel@it.net.au or John on 9333 6310.

Econotes: *Phytophthora dieback*

Phytophthora dieback – its impacts on our native animals

By Mark Garkaklis

For many years, animal ecologists have examined ecosystems and the effect that various elements within these have on our native fauna. Just one indirect change can have disastrous repercussions and *Phytophthora dieback* is fast proving to be a significant concern within many West Australian ecosystems.

What is *Phytophthora dieback*?

Phytophthora dieback is caused by *Phytophthora cinnamomi*, a microscopic fungus-like organism. The disease, previously known as 'jarrah dieback', is an introduced soil-born pathogen made up of fine growing threads which infect the roots of susceptible plant species, particularly banksias, hakeas, pea plants, grass-trees and large timber trees such as jarrah. As the threads grow into the roots, it kills the tissues in the roots and stem, eventually causing the plant to die.

The potential impact that this disease may have on our floral biodiversity is staggering. Of the estimated 9,000 plant species endemic to WA's South West, at least 2,000 are known to be directly killed by the pathogen. This represents more than 20 per cent of our endemic species. However, we still know very little about what effect *Phytophthora dieback* will have on the other elements within these ecosystems, including impacts on fauna. It is therefore necessary to look at habitat features and the requirements of fauna to determine the full impact of the disease.

How can *Phytophthora dieback* affect our fauna?

Let's consider the impact of *Phytophthora dieback* on the honey possum. Honey possums require vegetation communities that are dominated by highly productive, nectar producing plant species, such as the banksias, which occur in high densities within Proteaceous heathlands. These heathlands are extremely susceptible to *Phytophthora dieback*, particularly those areas in the higher rainfall zones between Eneabba and Esperance.

Large areas within these heaths have been ravaged by *Phytophthora dieback*, and the impact on nectar feeding birds and mammals is likely to be devastating.



By affecting the plants within the ecosystem that both the Honey Possum (above) and the Western Pigmy Possum (right) live in, *Phytophthora dieback* has the potential to cause devastation to our fauna as well as our flora. (Photo: Bert and Babs Wells/CALM)

Unfortunately, definitive data supporting this statement does not currently exist. However it is a likely possibility and, as a precaution, every action to limit the further spread of *Phytophthora dieback* into pristine heathlands should be taken.

Data on two small mammal species, the bush rat (*Rattus fuscipes*) in the southern coastal heathlands and the mardo (*Antechinus flavipes*) in jarrah forest has been collected. Both species have been negatively affected by the occurrence of *Phytophthora dieback* within their habitat, the most obvious impact being the diminishing population numbers of each species. In the jarrah forest for example a number of lower storey species, favoured by the mardo, are affected by *Phytophthora dieback*. In coastal heathland environments *Phytophthora dieback* affects taller species, which are favoured by bush rats. The resulting low, vertical vegetation structure is not ideal for bush rat survival leading to the number of animals found decreasing.

What can we do about this disease?

In ecosystems where *Phytophthora dieback* is a relevant threat, a management plan can be a useful tool in preparing and implementing measures to manage and reduce its impact.

For a new site of infection to occur, *Phytophthora dieback* must be moved there via infected soil, water or plants. Your management plan would need to incorporate practical management solutions, which focus



on reducing the risk of transporting the pathogen to an area. Such strategies would include washing mud and earth from vehicles entering the site, cleaning boots and identifying and signposting high-risk areas. It may also be prudent to consider limiting movements in natural ecosystems, including the closure of vehicle and walking tracks, during periods of wet weather. The key with this disease is to not only implement management strategies but to be vigilant with their application.

Further information:

- Garkaklis, M.J., Calver, M.C., Wilson, B.A. and Hardy G.E.St, J. (in press). Habitat alteration caused by an introduced plant disease, *Phytophthora cinnamomi*: a potential threat to the conservation of Australian forest fauna. In: *Management of Australia's Forest Fauna* (Ed: D. Lunney). NSW Zoological Society, Sydney.
- Kilgour, S. Managing Dieback in Bushland – A guide for landholders and community conservation groups. Ed: Jan Knight. Dieback Working Group, 1999.
- Further details on managing *Phytophthora* can be found at the following website www.naturebase.net/science/dcc_splash.html

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All groups welcome visitors
and new members.

Hills Region

Rain, Rain, More Rain

By Jenny Johnson

Hopefully by the time you are reading this, a little rain has fallen on the dehydrated bushland. This summer our plants have received very little moisture, as the usual storms have failed to arrive in the hills region. An autumn assessment will reveal where we have planted the most appropriate species, as they will be the survivors! Hills plants need to be tough as bush regenerators are loath to venture out to water in the summer heat.

Activities during the past months have been restricted to the never ending rubbish collection, seed picking and spot spraying of summer weeds. Plant propagation is under way for most groups, as the seedlings need to be ready for planting out with the first rains. This is particularly important along creek margins, as these plants need to be well established before the strong winter water flows.

The old gravel pit in Timbertop Way, Parkerville is being transformed from a moonscape into habitat that will include wetlands and eventually a forest area typical of the local bushland.

The Parkerville Village Reserves Group is working on a fire plan for its area. A small grant has also been received from the Eastern Metropolitan Regional Council (EMRC) to work with the local historical society. Free tours of Parkerville's best natural and cultural heritage sites will be provided for residents this spring.

Contractors for Mundaring Shire's Bushcare program have been carrying out eradication of blackberries, watsonia and weedy wattles in Brookside Park, Parkerville; Falls Park in Hovea; Lion Mill Creek, Mt Helena; and Rocky Gully in Mt Helena.

A Green Corps team is presently surveying creek lines in Mt Helena and assessing bank stability and shading. Other waterways in Mundaring will be surveyed at a later date.

Local Volunteer Bush Fire Brigades are working with Bushcare groups to assist in reducing fire hazards in a manner that will encourage biodiversity as well as reduce fire fuel. This will be achieved by conducting small, carefully managed autumn burns in selected areas.

Like everyone else, we are looking forward to an early break to the rainy season. Keep up the rain dances!

For more information contact Jenny on 9295 4467 or Linda on 9290 6666.

Central Region

Planning for the coming year

By Dani Boase-Jelinek

The Shenton Bushland committee met recently to plan our activities for the coming year, with input from Bronwen Keighery and Steve McCabe. The main focus of discussions was to develop a strategy for managing the bushland that will ensure the weeds do not get out of control.

Our strategy throughout 2003 was to use chemicals to control widespread weeds such as veldgrass, freesias and lachenalia, while localised weeds such as watsonia and Geraldton carnation weed were hand weeded.

Our successes in 2003 included removal of over 90 per cent of the Geraldton carnation weed from the bushland, however the remaining few percent will produce seed, which is prolific, so we will not be able to see the results of our efforts until next winter when the seeds sprout. We also managed to reduce the infestations of lachenalia and watsonia, hopefully preventing the plants from producing seed.

The challenges we faced in 2003 related to the fact that veldgrass spraying is so expensive and, as such, we were unable to spray the entire bushland in one year. Instead, we rotated the sprayed areas, though this means that we are unlikely to be fully rid of veldgrass, because there is always enough surviving to produce more seeds. The freesias were not easy to control with chemicals and continue to spread through the bushland, as does the pelargonium.

With all this in mind, our strategy for 2004 revolves around finding ways to reduce the influx of weeds, to increase the number of active people in the bushland, and to use our resources most efficiently. We have decided to hold 'fun' work days to encourage more community participation. For example, we plan to invite people to come and mulch up lupins which they can then take home to use as compost on their gardens (lupins make a rich compost that is expensive to buy). We will be inviting Shenton College students to conduct studies in the bushland as part of their learning. In addition, we will continue to explore ways of increasing active

membership in the Friends group.

In the meantime, our 2004 work program is off to a great start and we have been successful in obtaining a \$5,000 Community Conservation Grant for weed control, which will go towards the elimination of veldgrass and bulbous weeds.

Work continues in the bushland each Sunday morning (8-10am) and we would welcome all those who wish to lend a hand.

For more information contact Dani on 9381 3470

From little things, big things grow!

By John Mackay

Last year, we had a small fire go through Wireless Hill. After the fire was out, the Fire and Emergency Services Authority (FESA) advised the Melville City Council that four large jarrah trees would need to be felled.

To our disappointment, the Council made a decision to act on this advice. These trees were located five metres from the road side and 30 metres from the verge and, as they posed no real problem, the Friends of Wireless Hill felt compelled to raise concerns with both the Council and FESA about the validity of the decision. Our concerns stemmed from photos of the felled trees which showed that the canopy of the trees was still laden with leaves and should not have been deemed 'out-of-control'.

Letters of complaint were written to the Melville City Council and FESA through our local member, Dr Janet Woollard. This resulted in a meeting to discuss the issue and the outcome was that FESA would not, in the future, remove or recommend the felling of any trees without first consulting the local council.

This outcome was a great success for the Friends of Wireless Hill and we feel it sets a wonderful example for other small parks in Perth and the Friends groups that participate in the rehabilitation and conservation of these areas.

For more information contact John Mackay on 9317 9222.

North West Region

Herbarium

By Mark Brundrett

Since 1999, the Friends of Warwick Bushland (FoWB) have been documenting native plants located within 60ha of bushland in Warwick Open Space and Warwick Senior High School.

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Specimens of each type of plant are collected, pressed, dried, identified and then mounted onto card to form a reference field herbarium. This herbarium is for use by the FoWB and community. Many new species have been recorded for the area and we are pleased to advise that the plant list has now doubled to over 200 species. During our collections, one priority species has been found, a ground-cover pea flower, and a number of other significant species recorded, among them the beautiful dwarf wedding bush. After five years of collecting, new species are still being discovered.

An important part of this project is that it is registered as a Regional Herbarium with CALM. Duplicate specimens are sent to CALM's WA Herbarium in an effort to contribute to the State's knowledge of our special plants. Up until 2001, CALM provided funding to support the community groups compiling Regional Herbariums. Equipment, identification and database services were provided free of cost to each regional herbarium group.

WA's South West has an estimated 8,000 plant species and is one of the world's top 25 biodiversity hotspots, the only one in Australia. More than 80 per cent of these plants occur nowhere else in the world. Many special plants occur in our urban bushland, so the FoWB are pleased to be able to play an active role in the identification and conservation of a range of plant species.

For more information contact Karen on 9342 8482 or Robyn on 9342 6840.

Group with a difference

By Nicole Lincoln

The Yanchep National Park Volunteer Group consists of approximately forty highly motivated people who are committed to nature conservation projects within Yanchep National Park. The group has been in operation for just over 12 months and in this short amount of time have managed to achieve great goals.

Volunteers have collected, extracted and sown seeds, transplanted seedlings and propagated cuttings in the volunteer operated nursery at the park. A minimum of 6,000 native seedlings and 45 different species were propagated in the nursery this year, a very exciting outcome for the groups' first effort. The group is using the seed bank to grow seedlings for the rehabilitation of degraded bush sites and garden beds within the recreation area.



The Yanchep National Park Volunteer Group (Photo: Nicole Lincoln)

In addition to the nursery and tree planting, volunteers are involved in invertebrate studies and displays, trail maintenance, providing visitor information, litter collections and cave projects.

As a token of the appreciation, CALM recently erected a sign along the Woodlands Walk Trail rehabilitation site in order to acknowledge the countless hours and hard work contributed by the group.

With a sense of pride, the group is ready to undertake the cycle again in 2004 and are so dedicated that they began seed collection during the summer months.

The group carry out work each weekday between 9am and 12 noon and are always on the lookout for more people interested in being involved.

For more information contact Nicole Lincoln on 9561 1004 or nicolel@calm.wa.gov.au



Members of the Yanchep National Park Volunteer Group working in the nursery. (Photo: Nicole Lincoln)

Ospreys at Quinns

By David Wake

This summer an osprey and her offspring have been seen along the rocky coast south of Quinns Rocks. Early morning walkers can see the birds sitting on the Keep Off signs and occasionally catching fish. The pair reside in a telecommunications tower off Quinns Road, with the tell tale nest of sticks sitting amongst the microwave dishes and aerials.

The coastal bushland between Mindarie Keys marina and Quinns Rocks townsite is

habitat for the ospreys, fairy wrens, various honeyeaters and a host of other species. It is also a focal point for bushcare work by the Quinns Rocks Environmental Group. This work has included ongoing control of peppertrees, which seem to be a growing problem on coastal limestone. It is proving hard to eradicate: cutting down the pepper trees and painting the stumps with glyphosate caused vigorous suckering.

This section of coastal reserve was our site for the recent Clean Up Australia Day. Many local residents joined in collecting litter, yielding a surprising amount and range of rubbish especially near the beachfront

The City of Wanneroo has released a draft management plan for the coastal reserve for comment. The group is working with the City to seek fencing of bushland, comprehensive weed control and rehabilitation of degraded sites. This should help maintain habitat for the local wildlife, ospreys included, into the future.

To find out more about the Quinns Rocks Environmental Group's work contact David Wake 9305 9575 or Renata Zelinova 9305 9382.

Editors note: I suggest you refer to the Environmental Weeds Action Network pamphlet on Woody Weed Control. It suggests that cutting and painting offers only temporary control of Japanese pepper trees (*schinus terebinthifolius*) with resultant resprouting. They suggest both basal bark and stem injection techniques as preferable control methods. Information available at <http://members.iinet.net.au/~ewan/>

REGIONAL REPORTS

South East Region

Changing of the tools!

By John Bowler

The friends of Ellis Brook Valley have already been busy as bees this year, with construction of a boardwalk project in full swing.

The group have exchanged their usual working tools (shovels and trowels), for hammers and measuring tapes in order to ensure that the latest joint project with the City of Gosnells, including a picnic area and a plant garden, is successful.

The project is one of the biggest that the group has undertaken and funding has been acquired from various sources. The City of Gosnells has contributed \$1,000 and CALM \$3,000. The Ready Mix Quarry donated five loads of fill, whilst another local company, West Park Services, donated timber bollards.



Hard at it: Friends of the Ellis Brook Valley have been busy improving the area.

Friends group gets busy

The donation of five truck-loads of fill by the Readymix Quarry is helping the development of a picnic area at Ellis Brook Valley Reserve.

Another local company, Westpark Services, has also donated timber bollards.

The Friends of Ellis Brook Valley is undertaking the project, which was recently given the go-ahead by Gosnells City Council.

Friends project officer John Bowler said the group appreciated the generosity of the local companies.

He said the Rotary Club of Maddington, Scouts and local schools had helped with the project.

"This is a terrific example of the community, industry and local government cooperating to provide a valuable facility," Mr Bowler said.

The recent work has concentrated on improving the drainage of the site and creating a wetland area.

A Rotary Club sponsored gas barbecue, picnic tables and a toilet block have previously been constructed.

The plans for the project provide for future roads and car parks, a walk trail as well as botanical gardens of local native plant species.

The Maddington Rotary Club contributed to the largest part of the project by sponsoring construction of the toilet block, gas barbecue and picnic tables.

In addition to this invaluable financial support, the friends were also assisted by the local scouts and school groups who participated in a range of activities. All these actions will make it easier for the community, including people with disabilities, to visit the area without contributing to the destruction of the surrounding fauna and flora.

Most importantly, the work that we have undertaken to construct the boardwalk, plant garden and picnic area is a terrific example of how community groups, industry and local government can work together to make a difference. It has been great to have the support and assistance of so many local groups.

For more information contact John Bowler on johnhbowler@git.com.au



Volunteers of the Yunderup Century Park Association at a recent work day. (Photo: Wendy Manchester)

South West Region

Awarded for Efforts

By Wendy Manchester

On Monday, 26 January, the Yunderup Century Park Association was pleased to accept the Shire of Murray's Award for Community Group of the Year. The chairman and the committee would like to extend a special message of thanks to all of those fabulous volunteers who have assisted us over the past three years.

Yunderup Centenary Park is bordered by South Yunderup Road and the banks of the Murray River. The group formed more than three years ago in an effort to save this lovely piece of bushland for future generations. Commencing with a small grant from the Murray Shire, the association has received contributions from the community, sponsors and donors, which have made our work slightly easier.

When we set about planning for future works, we developed a passive activity, tourist and landcare theme. From here the park started to take shape, with the help of 30 association members and approximately fifteen active members who attend monthly busy bees.

Spraying weeds, planting and removal of debris are the main activities, however we have successfully raised enough funds to establish an exciting adventure playground and barbecue area in addition to protecting the natural parkland.

For more information contact Wendy Manchester on 9537 7394.



Friends of Ellis Brook unloading fill from the Readymix quarry. (Photo: Courtesy of the Gosnells Examiner)

Group Profile: Friends of Dianella Bushland

Formed in 1995, the Friends of Dianella Bushland (FoDB) look after nine hectares of bushland known as Cottonwood Crescent Bushland. Situated adjacent to Channel 7, this is an important piece of bushland supporting a colony of western grey kangaroos and many species of reptiles, insects and spiders, as well as providing a sanctuary and breeding ground for local and migratory birds.

Unique and untouched

Cottonwood Crescent Bushland is a remnant of extensive bushland.

FoDB Secretary Jan Bant said that unlike other bushlands in Perth, the reserve was one of the few that was unaffected by the original farming allotments and had not been subjected to clear felling for farming.

The reserve is on the crest of a remnant sand dune and the diverse range of vegetation types occurring in the area exist because of the variations in height and underlying limestone. The variety of plants and flowering seasons supports a range of invertebrates including the now rare western jewel butterfly.

Millionaires' misfortune forms Friend's success

In 1987, Channel 7 purchased the land known as Lot 50, Cottonwood Crescent from the State Housing Commission. Shortly after Channel 7 was bought by Quintex (of Christopher Skase fame) who sold it to Bell Resources. Bell Resources sold it to the Bond Group. When the Bond Group collapsed, the land went up for sale and it was here that the fight began.

Under the leadership of local veterinarian Jon Lumley, a group of concerned citizens formed the Friends of Dianella Bushland.

We put forward a proposal to the Ministry of Planning, the City of Stirling and TVW Enterprises to purchase the land.

"The land was purchased by the Western Australian Planning Commission and reserved for bushland conservation and compatible passive recreation' under the Metropolitan Region Scheme," said Jan.

Inspiration and innovation promote participation

"In an effort to increase community participation, we have worked extremely



Above left: One of the reserves resident kangaroo's, saying hello to the camera. (Photo: Jan Bant)

Above right: Members of the group during one of their work days. (Photo: Jan Bant)

Below left: The group conducts regular community walks through Cottonwood Reserve Bushland. (Photo: Jan Bant)

Below right: Just one of the reserves resident kangaroo's. (Photo: Jan Bant)

hard to promote the bushland. Our membership of 40 newsletter subscribers and 10 active members has tried to create interesting and fun ways to get the community into the reserve," Jan said.

Over the past few years, during October and November, the group has conducted successful themed walks. One of the most successful was 'A Brush with the Bush' coordinated by artist Annie Q. Medley, where several artists showed how they drew inspiration from the bush. Other successful walks were the Channel to Channel Walk incorporating the private bush area of Channel 9 and comparing it with the Cottonwood Crescent Reserve, and a Photography Walk with Brian James, who gave terrific tips on how to get the best photos of flora and fauna.

"Involvement at the themed days continues to grow each year and we believe its success lies behind the fact that we are providing participants with an opportunity to enjoy themselves as well as learning about and exploring the local bushland," Jan said.

The future

The group is looking forward to its tenth anniversary next year and is busily preparing to celebrate the occasion.

"We have worked extremely hard over the past nine years and apart from ensuring that the area is managed appropriately we have also successfully installed limestone walking paths and a limestone car park," said Jan.

FoDB has a core group of dedicated individuals including Chairman Rick Denniston, Phylis Robertson who leads many of the regularly planned walks, Dave Pike who also leads some walks, Kirsten Tullis who leads the fungi walks, Barbara Agocs who arranges publicity and Jan Bant, the secretary and treasurer who is also responsible for the group's displays

"We look forward to encouraging more members of the community to enjoy the reserve, many are unaware the reserve is open to the public and we have recently submitted proposals to City of Stirling to provide more access gates so people can enter the from the northern and eastern sides," said Jan.

Contacts

For information about FoDB activities and meetings, contact Jan on 9344 2872 or webrite@crystal.com.au.



Resources

New and useful publications

- **Coastal Plants: Perth and the South West Region** – by Elizabeth Rippey and Barbara Rowland. This book contains information on the flora of the entire coastal dunes of the South West corner of WA, with descriptive information and watercolour drawings. To obtain a copy, contact UWA Press on 6488 3670 or by email (uwap@cyllene.uwa.edu.au).
- **New Atlas of Australian Birds** – Contains 4,000 distribution maps for over 650 bird species, including seasonal changes, breeding range and relative abundance across Australia. The atlas also includes change maps for over 250 species, identifying which species are more or less common since the first atlas was completed 20 years ago. An essential item for environmental planners as well as bird enthusiasts. The book costs \$89.95 and can be obtained from The Birding Shop on (03) 9813 5488 or by visiting www.thebirdingshop.com and other bookshops.
- **Looking after Australia for everybody – the Lucky Country** – by Joanna Seabrook. A collection of articles written by Joanna, promoting the idea of making rural towns more wildlife friendly. Although small, this book is big on inspiration and was launched by the York Land Conservation District Committee in March 2004. To obtain a copy, contact the author by email (joannaseabrook@westnet.com.au).
- **Bringing Back the Bush** – A complete and comprehensive manual of the 'Bradley method' for bush regeneration through weed control and elimination. It offers detailed explanation on bush regeneration using non-chemical, caring and long-term methods. The book costs \$19.95 and can be obtained from The Birding Shop on (03) 9813 5488 or by visiting www.thebirdingshop.com and other bookshops.
- **A Guide to the Reptiles & Frogs of the Perth Region** – A comprehensive, easy to use guide covering the fascinating reptiles and frogs of the Perth area. It is a book for nature lovers, bushwalkers, gardeners and students and is small enough to keep in a backpack for instant reference. The book costs \$18.95 and can be obtained from The Birding Shop on (03) 9813 5488 or by visiting www.thebirdingshop.com and other bookshops.
- A new online resource assists community groups to participate in decision making and improve natural resource partnerships for sustainability. The **Citizen Science Toolbox** contains principles and strategies to enhance stakeholder involvement in any planning or governance related project with more than 60 community involvement 'tools' outlined. Visit www.coastal.crc.org.au/toolbox/index for further information.
- The WA State Government have updated an **online grants directory**, which will assist community groups, local government and businesses in accessing millions of dollars available through a vast range of financial assistance programs. The grants directory is updated annually and can be accessed by visiting www.dlgrd.wa.gov.au/grantsDir/default.asp.
- The **World Wide Wattle** website has recently been launched and provides excellent information on all Australian species of Acacia. The site provides an easy to use reference tool for anyone wishing to obtain detailed descriptions about this native flora. To access the site simply visit www.worldwidewattle.com.

Website and database watch

- **The National Volunteer Skills Centre** aims to support organisations throughout Australia involved with volunteer practices to develop and implement their training and skills development needs. The materials provided on this website can be downloaded free of charge. There is a wide range of information including useful training tools, latest news updates, training calendars from around the country, discussion forums and much more. To access the site visit www.nvsc.org.au.

Ecoplan News is a quarterly newsletter of Ecoplan, a Department of Conservation and Land Management program to support community involvement in bushland conservation

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