

Statewide

May 2006 No 13

Ever heard of Nature Deficit-Disorder? The causes of this syndrome and the link between this and the current generation of 'plugged-in' children alienated from nature is defined in noted futurist and author Richard Louv's latest book *Last Child in the Woods: Saving Our Children from Nature-Deficit Disorder*. This enlightening read endorses the ethos of our EcoEducation programs – to value and encourage exploration and creative learning in the natural environment. Such experiences result in better learning outcomes than those provided in traditional classrooms and studies also show that a little bit of exposure to nature decreases ADHD symptoms!

Some West Australian students are already lucky enough to have teachers who share Louv's principles and continue to visit our centres. To quote Louv "This next generation has perhaps the greatest challenge ever faced by humanity: to remake society in a sustainable way. They need hope, and they need that sense of wonder and visceral connection that comes only by 'getting out into nature'".

We welcome your continuing involvement with EcoEducation and participation in our programs that help fulfil curriculum requirements and with the business of 'getting out into nature'.

Liz Moore Senior EcoEducation Officer, Department of Conservation and Land Management



*Students 'getting out into nature' – hands-on learning on the Catchment Carers' Trail.
Photo – Robyn Weir*

Be a Nature Conservation Officer for a Night



Teachers taking a break from 'monitoring' on the Weir View Walk during a Professional Learning (PL) opportunity in the Perth Hills.

Professional learning in the Perth Hills

Setting traps, checking a possum pouch for young, stroking an echidna (yes you can!), sparking up your nocturnal senses on our Sense-ational Trail or taking part in the science of wildlife recovery are all part of the Perth Hills National Parks Centre's (formerly The Hills Forest Discovery Centre) camp for teachers. Come along and assist CALM's threatened species monitoring program, *Western Shield*. Stay overnight in tranquil jarrah forest overlooking Mundaring Weir and leave with a wealth of knowledge and classroom resources.

When: 5pm Friday 19 May to 12.30pm Saturday 20 May.

Cost: \$55 (\$44 STAWA members), which includes GST, accommodation, meals, activities and resources.

Bookings: ph 9295 6149 or 6300, fax 9295 3247 or email ecoeducation@calm.wa.gov.au.

Who: Primary and Secondary teachers – all learning areas.

Children's Week 2006

Nominations for Children's Week 2006 (21–29 October) Awards of Recognition are now open. The awards are for children from Kindergarten to Year 7 and are based on the United Nations' International Year of Deserts and Desertification.

The theme for art entries is the Australian desert and desert communities and the theme for science entries is desert processes and ecosystems. Visit Meerilinga Young Children's Foundation's website (www.meerilinga.org.au) for details.

News from the Perth Hills National Parks Centre

Yes, The Hills Forest Discovery Centre has changed its name. The centre, now known as the Perth Hills National Parks Centre, will now be a focus for the newly created Perth Hills national parks.

A focus on sustainable living

EcoEducation has already hosted many excursions and activities this year. Our earliest visitors used our centre in an imaginative way – two classes of Year 7 students from Methodist Ladies' College experienced our Aboriginal program, *Six-seasons Walkabout*, as a focus for their topic of work on sustainability. MLC's approach to sustainability was to study human impact over time, to investigate current ways we use the land and compare it to how it was used by Aboriginal people and early settlers, highlighting the cost of today's lifestyle. What a great way to address the value of environmental responsibility!



Vernon Thorne, EcoEducation Leader, supervises student Bradley Gallagher during a Six- seasons Walkabout excursion.

Farewell Maree

Sadly our EcoEducation Team Leader, Maree Morisey, is leaving us. Maree has been with us since 2001 and brought a wealth of experience in practical environmental education and an understanding of the needs of schools. We know that you and your students will miss her lively guidance, considerable knowledge and infectious enthusiasm. We wish her success and happiness in her future work.

Attention Secondary Science teachers!

Are you planning an excursion for your Year 9, 10 or 11 students? Our new *Fire for Life* excursion includes plenty of hands-on fieldwork and addresses fire management, the impacts of wildfire and the importance of fire to biodiversity.



Thanks to Alcoa World Alumina Australia for continuing to sponsor EcoEducation programs at the Perth Hills National Parks Centre.

Term 2 Professional Learning (PL) opportunities

We encourage teachers to attend a PL before booking an excursion. This will familiarise you with the centre's facilities, the excursion activities and provide you with resources to prepare your students for an excursion.

Henderson Environmental Centre, Star Swamp

Find out about activities and resources that focus on threatened native animals and tuart woodlands at Star Swamp, City of Stirling.

Greening Australia and CALM joint PL

When: 8.30am to 3pm Friday 26 May.

Who: Primary and Secondary teachers – all learning areas.

Cost: \$55 (\$33 – pre-service teachers) **Free for the first 10 teachers who book plus \$100 teacher relief.**

PLs in the South West Region

Wellington Discovery Forest and Margaret River Eco Discovery Centre have many great PLs and program opportunities.

Fire for Life **FREE!**

Get an insight into the effects of wildfire in the Perth Hills. Listen to experts and develop a proper understanding of the complexity of fire management, prescribed burning and use of geographical information systems (GIS) to fight fires. Take away resources for your classroom.

When: 9am to 3pm Saturday 6 May.

Where: Perth Hills National Parks Centre.

Who: Primary and Secondary teachers in all learning areas.

Whole school staff PLs and Inservices at your school

These are available on request.

For bookings/enquiries contact EcoEducation (see 'EcoEducation contacts' overleaf).

Special offers

Arbor Day and World Environment Day

World Environment Day is on Monday 5 June and, this year, Arbor Day will be held on Friday 9 June. We will celebrate these days with a series of special activities that focus on sustaining biodiversity in the International Year of Deserts and Desertification. Middle and Upper Primary School students can meet a CALM Ranger, take part in Aboriginal culture activities, sample macro invertebrates, have close encounters with reptiles, raptors and/or marsupials, plant a tree or tune into tuarts.

When: Friday 2 June.

Cost: \$6.60 per student (includes GST) for full day of activities.

Where: Henderson Environmental Centre and Perth Hills National Parks Centre.



Celebrate Wildlife Recovery

Our *Western Shield* schools program is celebrating 10 years of school involvement in wildlife recovery.

More than 70,000 students and teachers have spread the word, used our resources and been involved in camps and excursions. We plan to celebrate, reward those of you who have contributed, get your feedback for future directions and showcase the partnership between CALM and Perth Zoo's threatened species breeding programs. If you would like to join us from 4.30 to 7.30pm on Tuesday 13 June, at Perth Zoo, to meet our scientists and some unique native animals, please contact Liz Moore by email (lizm@calm.wa.gov.au).

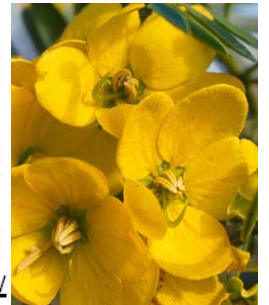
Left: Students helping with CALM's Western Shield project.

Congratulations

Congratulations to Ella Marrion from Parkerville Primary School, who successfully explained that the February Plant of the Month, poverty bush (*Eremophila alternifolia*), derives its name from its ability to survive in very dry, inhospitable environments. Ella has won a place on our *Be a Nature Conservation Officer for a Night* camp valued at \$55. Well done!

FloraBase
Plant of the Month

Sticky cassia
Senna glutinosa



See what's flowering each month:

<http://florabase.calm.wa.gov.au/potm/>

Great venue for a camp!

The Perup Centre and the surrounding forest offer an environmental and ecologically sustainable nature-based experience in one of the great conservation areas in the south-west forest and is home to some of WA's rarest mammals. The complex is solar powered and effluent is treated through a zero nutrient pollution disposal system.

Perup is about an hours' drive from Manjimup and groups up to 35 can be accommodated. To find out more about The Perup, contact Julia Northin on 9771 7988 or by email (julian@calm.wa.gov.au).



Perup Homestead.

EcoEducation contacts

Statewide

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South West

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Visit CALM's NatureBase website at
www.naturebase.net/schools for further information.