

Statewide

August 2006 No 14

With spring just around the corner, EcoEducation is already busy with bookings for the second half of the year. Our forests, parks and reserves are ideal settings for hands-on learning and spring is definitely the best time to be 'out there'. But we hope the long-awaited and much-needed rain will come (despite the challenge it poses to running excursions!).

The coming semester heralds many changes and new opportunities for us all. This is our first newsletter under the banner of the new Department of Environment and Conservation (DEC), formed by the merger of the Department of Conservation and Land Management (CALM) and the Department of Environment. Change has come also to our South West Region where we welcome Sue Miller as our Project Officer, who is standing in for Janet Date while she's on leave. Sue, a Secondary Science teacher with a PhD in natural resource management, is sure to be a great asset to you and your students.

This semester we are offering teacher relief funding for professional learning (PL) days and our camps at Wellington Discovery Forest (WDF) and Margaret River Eco Discovery Centre (MREDC) as well as subsidies for bus travel. These are all opportunities not to be missed! Read on to find out details.

A fantastic new DVD, *The Day the Flames Came*, about the impact of the 1961 Dwellingup wildfire on the community is now available for Society & Environment teachers. A new resource about national parks for Middle School will be launched soon and an interactive CD about tuart woodland conservation is being finalised. We will keep you posted.

Please read on for details and contacts for our programs, special offers, resources and camps.

Liz Moore Senior EcoEducation Officer, DEC



Right: EcoEducation Team Leader, Lorita Schmitz, and Holy Rosary School students celebrate World Environment Day at the Henderson Environmental Centre.

Above: Ranford Primary School students discover the watery secrets of Star Swamp.



## Special offers – \$100 teacher relief per school for PL days

**Professional Learning (PL) day at Perth Hills National Parks Centre** – Teacher relief is provided and a \$50 bus subsidy offered for your first excursion booking. Familiarise yourself with the centre, its facilities and programs, and leave with resources for classroom use.

**When:** 9am to 3pm Friday 11 August

**Fire for Life PL day at Margaret River** – Teacher relief provided (See page 3)



**Be a Nature Conservation Officer for a Night**  
Professional Learning at WDF and MREDC **FREE!**

Join us to celebrate 10 years of the *Western Shield* schools program. Lucky dip prizes galore!

Setting and checking traps for chuditch and possums, stirring your nocturnal senses on our Sense-ational trail and taking part in the science of wildlife recovery will make this a special camp.

**WDF:** 5pm Thursday 21 to 3.30pm Friday 22 September

**MREDC:** 5pm Thursday 26 to 3.30pm Friday 27 October

**Included:** Accommodation, meals, activities and resources

**Who:** Primary and Secondary teachers – all learning areas

See 'Contacts' for booking contact details.

Left: Anita Verne, St Mary's Anglican Girls' School Science teacher and Peter Polakiewicz, from Eddystone Primary School, enjoy David Pettit's raptor encounter session during a PL at the Henderson Environmental Centre. To quote Anita: "The day was full of activity and an invaluable source of information, resources and networking opportunities – a good balance of fun and education".

## News from Perth Hills National Parks Centre

Last semester was one of the busiest on record with more than 7200 participants, some major events including a **Fire for Life** PL, several whole-of-school visits and six groups of students who combined camps with EcoEducation excursion activities, enjoying the quality of our programs and the campground facilities. Lorita Schmitz, EcoEducation Team Leader, and Linda Gallagher, Acting Coordinator, have done a sterling job overseeing the logistics of these big days.

### Attention Secondary teachers

Planning an excursion for your Year 10 or 11 Science or Society & Environment students? Our **Fire for Life** program (which includes an excursion, classroom resources and a PL) has plenty of hands-on fieldwork and addresses the impacts of wildfire and the importance of fire to biodiversity. We've had some excellent feedback!

### Whole school visit and camp Falls Road Primary School!

For the second year running all the students and teachers of Falls Road Primary School descended on the centre for a sunny, winter's day and took part in a range of excursions – from Aboriginal culture to threatened fauna.

### Popular new Secondary School excursions

*Discovering Diversity*, which explores ecosystem diversity, was heavily booked with seven groups of Year 8 and 9 students taking up this opportunity.



*Rare find! Falls Road Primary School students caught a phascogale on their camp*



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



*During the PL day Science and Society & Environment teachers Nolene Rowell from Rossmoyne Senior High School and Steve Lowry from Perth Modern School get their hands dirty with Fire for Life excursion activities under the direction of Rob Towers, DEC's Regional Fire Coordinator.*

### Florabase Plant of the Month

Sticky cassia  
*Pileanthus peduncularis*

See what's flowering each month:

[www.naturebase.net/florabase/](http://www.naturebase.net/florabase/)



## Thanks to supporters of our *Western Shield* Schools Program Celebrating 10 years ...

A big thank you to all those who turned out to celebrate and speak about their part in the *Western Shield* wildlife recovery program. Thanks again to all those who have spent thousands of hours spreading the word and helping with our monitoring program, especially the wonderful teachers Coralie Lister, Anita Verne and Ian Preston and lecturer Catherine Baudins. We had a great evening with scientists, a wildlife officer and Keeper In Charge of the native species breeding program at Perth Zoo. A highlight of the evening was a special showing of bilbies mating with entertaining commentary from June Butcher, Chairman of the Kanyana Fauna Rehabilitation Centre.

*Right: Teachers taking a close look at a large, active, but protected, carpet python under the care of DEC's Wildlife Officer, Luke Bentley.*



## 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 and the excursion activities and provide you with resources to prepare your students for an excursion.

### Henderson Environmental Centre, Star Swamp after school PL **FREE**

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

**When:** 3.45pm to 5.30pm Friday 18 August.

**Who:** Primary and Secondary teachers – all learning areas



### PLs in the South West Region

*Be a Nature Conservation Officer for a Night* – See page 1

*Fire for Life PL* - FREE plus \$100 teacher relief per school

This PL gives you an overview of excursion activities for Years 10, 11 and 12 Science, Society & Environment and Geography students. Take away resources and a new DVD, *The Day the Flames Came*, about the Dwellingup 1961 fire.

**When:** 9am to 3pm Tuesday 12 September

**Where:** Margaret River Eco Discovery Centre

**Who:** Secondary teachers all learning areas

### Whole school staff PLs and inservices at your school

These are also available on request.

Bookings/enquiries for PLs See 'Contacts' below.

## Know your tuart woodlands?

### Years 5, 6 or 7 Win a free excursion to the Henderson Environmental Centre

These birds are two of 11 species that live in remnant tuart woodlands, once common along the Swan Coastal Plain.

Can your students answer these questions? What species are these birds? What has been the major cause of the loss and decline of tuart woodland since Europeans' arrival?

The first class to email the correct answer to [ecoeducation@dec.wa.gov.au](mailto:ecoeducation@dec.wa.gov.au) after 8.30am on Wednesday 30 August will receive a \$150 bus subsidy and a free excursion to the Henderson Environmental Centre, North Beach. This must be redeemed in 2006.

Search NatureBase for the answers at [www.naturebase.net/forest\\_facts/tuart](http://www.naturebase.net/forest_facts/tuart).



## EcoEducation contacts

### Statewide

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Bookings Officer, The Perth Hills National Parks Centre and The Henderson Environmental Centre programs

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Visit the 'For Schools' section of NatureBase at [www.naturebase.net/schools](http://www.naturebase.net/schools) for further information.