

## Statewide

Dear colleagues,

It's been an exciting time in EcoEducation in the last quarter. The then Chief Scientist, Professor Lyn Beazley, accompanied a group of teachers to Ningaloo on a Professional Learning (PL) opportunity called 'Be a Nature Conservation Officer for a (long) Weekend'. The staff in the Department of Environment and Conservation's (DEC's) Exmouth District organised an extraordinary trip, which included close encounters with turtles, endangered rock wallabies, reef biodiversity, fantastic geology and scenic vistas. This area is the focus of a World Heritage listing nomination.



*Teachers on the 'Be a Nature Conservation Officer for a (long) Weekend' PL with Chief Scientist Lyn Beazley (front row, far right).*

Professor Beazley and I also visited Shark Bay on the way to Ningaloo and saw the research and reintroduction work being done as part of Project Eden. A teacher PL is being planned for next year at Shark Bay and will hopefully also have a Ningaloo add-on. Please let me know if you are interested.

EcoEducation was on show for teachers from Western Australia and around Australia at events such as CONASTA 57 (the national conference of science teachers) in July, CONSTAWA (the State conference), the Curriculum Council's big day out and at DEC's PL days.

EcoEducation also featured at the two-day WA Education Expo in the July holidays. Thank you to the 100 teachers who spoke to Stephen Crane and me.

World Environment Day on 5 June was very busy with many schools taking advantage of the different programs offered at all of our centres. Bush Ranger cadets from Mount Lawley Senior High School helped out.

Elaine Horne, Senior EcoEducation Officer, DEC



*Elaine with ASTA Award presented at CONASTA 57.*

## September 2008 No 23

### Bush Rangers Western Australia – celebrating 10 years

Since the program's inception in 1998 with two pilot schools and 25 students, nearly 10,000 Western Australian young people have taken part in activities involved in biodiversity protection and conservation of our natural environment. Together with their leaders and school community members, Bush Ranger cadets have contributed more than 1.5 million volunteer hours to community and environmental conservation activities across Western Australia.



*So what is Bush Rangers WA?*

Bush Rangers WA is a voluntary program for secondary school students to provide them with the opportunity to take an active role in conservation projects and a variety of self-reliance, teamwork and initiative training activities. Part of the Cadets WA scheme, the Bush Ranger program develops personal, leadership, learning and social skills that are delivered in a linked community and environmental context.

As well as instilling a robust ethic for conservation, the Bush Ranger experience can be recognised in a student's Western Australian Certificate of Education and offers pathways to employment in natural resource management.

Above all, the Bush Ranger program produces positive and confident young Western Australians who have an understanding of and appreciation for the environment.

### Bush Rangers tackle Cooina Reserve

Bush Ranger cadets from Albany Secondary Education Support Centre are involved in a nature conservation project at Cooina Reserve on Albany's Mt Melville.

Working in conjunction with the City of Albany and Great Southern TAFE, the cadets removed invasive weeds from the area. In anticipation of the rehabilitation work, they also propagated local species of flora from seed, which will now be used to revegetate the reserve.

The cadets also plan to construct and position nesting boxes to encourage the return of animal and bird life to the area. It is a long-term project, which will see cadets rejuvenating paths and seating to make the area a 'happy place' once again for the local community to visit and enjoy.

**Florabase**  
Plant of the Month

Kapok bush  
*Cochlospermum fraseri*



See what's flowering each month:  
[www.dec.wa.gov.au/florabase](http://www.dec.wa.gov.au/florabase)

# ecoeducation news

## News from the Perth Hills National Parks Centre and the Henderson Environmental Centre

### World Environment Day 2008

World Environment Day was celebrated at the Perth Hills National Parks Centre and Henderson Environmental Centre on Thursday 5 June.

With nearly 300 students involved at the two sites, a dozen Bush Ranger volunteers and 11 different presenters, it was very busy, but very rewarding for all involved. Students experienced a rotation of five activities focusing on biodiversity, threatened species, Nyoongar culture, invertebrate diversity and introduced species.



*Students celebrate World Environment Day*

Schools from across Perth took part, with many wanting to book for next year. This year, most classes were Years 4 to 6.

### Special Christmas program

On 5 December, EcoEducation will be holding a fun Christmas special with rotations of several activities. Please book with Perth Hills EcoEducation.

### On the comeback?

Just before the mid-year holidays, Biology students from the Eastern Goldfields College at Kalgoolie rediscovered a chuditch during a trapping session with the local DEC national park rangers.



*Chuditch.*

In the past, chuditch were regularly caught in EcoEducation Monitoring Marsupials trapping sessions. Some years nearly all animals trapped were chuditch. In 2006, about half of the animals trapped were chuditch and about half were brush-tail possums.

In 2007, for no observable reason, all animals trapped were brush-tail possums. These results were the same this year.

Where had the chuditch gone? The finding of one chuditch by Eastern Goldfields College may indicate the start of their return. With continued student trapping sessions, some of the mysteries of population dynamics may be revealed.

EcoEducation's Monitoring Marsupials is great opportunity for senior students to get hands-on experience at trapping and the collection of scientific data in the field. Students' trapping results are fed directly into DEC's database. This is a great way to motivate your students. Book now!

Stephen Crane (Perth Hills National Parks Centre)

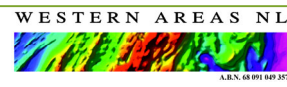
### Be a Nature Conservation Officer for a (long) Weekend

Thirteen secondary school teachers made the long haul to Ningaloo to undertake this PL. Tegan and Brooke from DEC's Exmouth District did a tag team effort to produce a fabulous program that gave teachers a taste of the activities they could do with their students at Ningaloo. We heard from researchers about coral, whale sharks, black footed rock wallabies, mangroves and turtles, among other organisms. We experienced the diversity of life on the Ningaloo reef and its exquisite scenic value.

Professor Lyn Beazley wrote after the trip: *"The Cape region is a wonderful place for science, both on the land and in the ocean. As Chief Scientist, I was privileged to join a Professional Development course for some of our wonderful teachers. We were all thrilled to see endangered species such as hawksbill turtles and black footed rock wallabies in their natural environment. We learned of the terrific work DEC is doing to protect the biodiversity of the precious area in the context of sustainable development; the work of community groups was also most interesting. I look forward to seeing the visit translated into educational opportunities for school students across WA."*

EcoEducation PL courses are available on 20 and 28 November and teachers can receive \$200 teacher relief per school. Contact Perth Hills National Parks Centre for more information and to book.

Sponsors of the Western Shield schools program:



### Statewide

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**Perth Hills National Parks Centre and Henderson Environmental Centre** contact the Customer Services Officer  
(ph 9295 6149 or 6300, fax 9295 3247, email [ecoeducation@dec.wa.gov.au](mailto:ecoeducation@dec.wa.gov.au)).

### EcoEducation in the South West Region

For enquiries, bookings for excursions or PLs contact Kristy Pengelly, Administrative Assistant at DEC's Wellington District Office. Phone: 9735 1909 Fax: 9734 4539 Email: [wdf@dec.wa.gov.au](mailto:wdf@dec.wa.gov.au). For the development of programs and educational liaison contact Hannah Hampson, Project Officer, DEC's South West Regional Office. Phone: 9725 5900 Mobile: 0427 980 306 or email [Hannah.Hampson@dec.wa.gov.au](mailto:Hannah.Hampson@dec.wa.gov.au)  
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