



Hello colleagues,

Incursions

I have just returned from the Bunbury DEC office, where our EcoEducation officer for Wellington and Margaret River, Hannah Hampson, is located. Together, we trialled a new incursion (where we come to you) for a large group of Year 2's. The children were very excited and said their favourite parts were stamping on the 'leaf litter sandwiches' spread on the floor, looking at the boxes of evidence with magnifiers, using their senses in the detective mystery, drawing and 'everything'. You can find information about this new incursions for Years 1 to 4 on page 38 of the *EcoEducation programs 2009* brochure.

Hannah has been busy creating a brand new Biodiversity Quiz Incursion. This was trialled with Year 10 students from Bunbury, who were challenged and, according to pre- and post-quiz tests, learnt a lot as well. This incursion is so new that it didn't make it into the 2009 brochure. For bookings, please see the incursion information on page 38 of the brochure and contact details on page 46.

Remember, we can bring the environment into your class, but there is no substitute for bringing your students on a curriculum-linked learning excursion with our fully trained EcoEducation staff.

Electronic Biodiversity Package

Take a look at the new Biodiversity Package written for Stage One Integrated Science. This can be used by

Years 9 to 12 in lower school Science, Biology, Earth and Environmental Sciences as well as Integrated Science. The Biodiversity Package, as well as the *EcoEducation programs 2009* brochure and other gems can be found at www.dec.wa.gov.au/schools-programs/ecoeducation/index.html

Excursions at Perth Hills

The Perth Hills EcoEducation Centre is facing a busy end to the term as the last two weeks of Term 1 are fully booked and the number of students taking part has increased compared to Term 1 last year. Thank you to everyone who takes the time and effort to bring their students into the natural environment with EcoEducation.

A first for Outdoor Education

The first Outdoor Education Professional Learning symposium was held at the Perth Hills EcoEducation Centre on 25 March with a second one in Bunbury on 31 March, showcasing the new EcoEducation Excursion that supports the 'Leave No Trace' curriculum. We can provide a lot of support to Outdoor Education teachers, so please pass this newsletter on to them.

Fire a force of life and *Investigating Tuart Woodlands* Professional Learning (PL) opportunities are being offered at Perth Hills, Bunbury and Margaret River in May and June. For more information see page 36 of the *EcoEducation programs 2009* brochure.

Elaine Horne, Senior EcoEducation Officer, DEC.

Bush Rangers WA in-service conference

Hi everyone, my name is Rich Weatherill and I am the new Bush Rangers WA coordinator. Yes, that's me looking uncomfortable with the snake crawling over my neck. I am thrilled to be taking on the coordination of this amazing program - Bush Rangers WA. Before starting this job I managed the Outreach team at Scitech, travelling across WA presenting the Scitech Roadshow.

I have been busy visiting Bush Ranger WA units in Perth and the Goldfields and I have learned that, in every unit, young Bush Rangers are doing some amazing work discovering and conserving our environment.

The annual in-service conference, held in March, was a great opportunity to meet unit leaders and instructors and learn about Bush Rangers activities throughout WA. Some of the highlights from the

in-service included a night stalk with Perth Zoo's Suzi Greenaway, measuring biodiversity in a quadrat with Monica Hunter from DEC's Species and Communities Branch and building relationships with reptiles in a workshop led by Vanessa Paget from Bob Cooper Survival. While some leaders jumped out of the room at the mention of snakes, others leapt at the opportunity to hold a python.

I will also head to the Perup Ecology Centre to join Bush Rangers from Emmanuel Catholic College and DEC scientists researching the declining woylie population in the Warren Region. I will share stories from this trip and other exciting Bush Rangers WA activities in the next EcoEducation newsletter.

Finally I cannot thank Ali Hansen enough for all of the great work she



has done with the Bush Rangers WA program in the past 15 months. She has provided me with invaluable guidance and I hope I can continue her efforts giving great opportunities for young people to engage in the environment and conservation.



ecoeducation news

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

Fire a force of life!

Victoria's fires provide a stark reminder that fire is an ever-present threat within Australia's natural environment. DEC is responsible for managing fire in bush environments, with fire policies that are based on years of research in the Western Australian environment.



The EcoEducation fire program draws on this expertise to provide a scientifically based study of the effects of fire on the natural environment. Students compare and contrast two burnt areas, one from a wildfire and the other from a controlled burn, providing them with knowledge that will help them understand and prepare for fires in the future.

Teachers also have the opportunity to be involved in a PL Day focused on fire. Come along and see what happens behind the scenes during a fire, speak with some of DEC's Fire Management Officers, tour our wildfire site and learn about the incident details. See our *EcoEducation programs 2009* brochure for more information.

Online camping

DEC is working to make campground bookings available online during 2009. What does that mean for you as a teacher organising a school camp? When schools book in, they get exclusive use of the area due to duty of care. So,

when bookings go online, if there is a camper already booked in the grounds, you'll miss out on those dates.

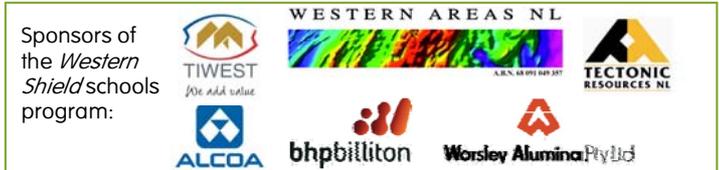
However, while the general public can only book online three months in advance, as a school group, you can book out the campgrounds before the public. This opportunity is only extended to schools that are also booking in for EcoEducation's programs.

Help make a change for the better

When visiting any EcoEducation Centre you will probably be asked to complete an evaluation form. This is your opportunity to provide feedback to help improve programs and we would much prefer constructive feedback to a token 'good'.

At Perth Hills this year, several programs are being intensively reviewed. Teacher feedback is a key driver for why and how we change, so please take the opportunity to give EcoEducation your feedback when the chance arises. Your comments are valued.

Lisa Ingram from the Perth Hills EcoEducation team has recently given birth to a beautiful healthy baby boy, James. Congratulations to Lisa and Derek. Lisa will be returning to work at the end of April.



Free incursion

The first full-day paid Incursion booking made after Tuesday 31 March will receive a free *Western Shield* 'Saving Threatened Fauna' Incursion at their school for two classes (numbers need to meet requirements in the brochure). One Incursion is available for bookings at the Perth Hills Centre and one for bookings at one of the Bunbury regional centres.



Florabase Plant of the Month

Marri
Corymbia calophylla



See what's flowering each month:
www.dec.wa.gov.au/florabase

Statewide

Elaine Horne, Senior EcoEducation Officer
Ph: 9334 0387 Mobile: 0407 196 626 Fax: 9334 0498
Email: elaine.horne@dec.wa.gov.au

Rich Weatherill, Bush Rangers Coordinator
Ph: 9334 0137 Fax: 9334 0498
Email: richard.weatherill@dec.wa.gov.au

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

EcoEducation in the South West Region

For any enquiries, bookings for excursions or PLs please contact DEC's Bunbury District Office and ask for EcoEducation bookings. Ph: 9725 4300 Email: wdf@dec.wa.gov.au For the development of programs and educational liaison contact Project Officer Hannah Hampson at DEC's South West Regional Office. Ph: 9725 5900 Mobile: 0427 980 306
Email: hannah.hampson@dec.wa.gov.au

Visit DEC's website at www.dec.wa.gov.au