



Dear Colleagues,

It is with considerable excitement and sadness that I bid congratulations and a fond farewell to our long-standing EcoEducation Officer, Wink Ferris (*pictured left*). Wink has been appointed to a position in the Department of Conservation and Land Management's (CALM's) Nature Conservation division and will be starting her new career this month, so will no longer be leading you through the forest. Wink has been with EcoEducation since its inception in the South West Region and has provided outstanding service to CALM in this capacity. She was even referred to as 'an institution at Wellington Discovery Forest (WDF)' recently – not bad for a young lady! All the EcoEducation Officers wish Wink well in her new job and know that teachers and their students will miss her cheerful welcome and knowledgeable ways at WDF. Good luck Wink!

We hope you have a great start to Term 2 and look forward to seeing you in the forest. Read on for more details about WDF's Marsupial Monitoring in May (22 to 26) – we're still taking bookings.

Janet Date, Project Officer, EcoEducation, CALM

Active citizenship rewarded

Year 5 and 6 classes from Dardanup Primary School performed a day's community service work at WDF during the last week of Term 1. The students helped CALM by clearing trails of dead waterbush; removing the stinkwort (*Dittrichia graveolens*) weed, which smells like camphor or Vicks Vapour Rub; and collecting rubbish.



Dardanup Primary School is in partnership with EcoEducation at WDF. The school students gain increased insight about how ecosystems work in their research plot in the forest as well as contribute towards the care of the centre.

The students did such a fantastic job the managers of Wellington Forest Cottages, Heather and Rob, awarded their classes a night of free accommodation at the cottages! Congratulations to everyone for a tremendous effort. The centre and trails look great and are ready for Term 2 school visits.

*Left: Dardanup Primary School students bag rubbish collected at WDF.
Right: A student grubbing out weeds on the Jarrah Trail.*



New taxidermy animals

When your class next visits the WDF centre they will be able to compare and contrast the introduced predators (European red fox and feral cat) with our endemic species (chuditch). We received two mounted exhibits of the predators on loan from the Sporting Shooters Association of Australia's South West Branch to use for education purposes and to increase awareness of CALM's *Western Shield* program through the *Back from the Brink* excursion. The *Western Shield* program is supported in schools by the *Western Shield Action Pack* (downloadable from CALM's NatureBase website at www.naturebase.net) as well as the *Deadly Protectors* video that was distributed to all schools during 2005 and can be found in your school library. If you can't locate the video in your school, please give us a call.

Margaret River Eco Discovery Centre (MREDC) is also getting some taxidermy animals! Taxidermist Mark Dalton has prepared a mainland quokka, ringtailed possum, quenda, chuditch and brushtailed phascogale for EcoEducation.

Numbat reintroduction update

Radio collars have helped us keep a watchful eye on the numbats that were released in the south-west forest in December 2005.

What they've helped us discover is that, unfortunately, one male was killed, possibly by a chuditch, close to the release site. Remains and his radio collar were recovered. But, in February, a light plane with a radio-tracking aerial flew over the area and located the three remaining numbats, two males and one female. CALM's Nature Conservation staff will attempt to track the animals on land as well as via aerial surveillance.

Of the three numbats, the female had moved the furthest from her release site, a distance of 10.9 km, and the other males had moved 6.8 km and 3.8 km from theirs.

We plan to continue tracking the numbats for several months, and, if possible, even capture them to change the radio collar batteries.

Numbats are basically solitary animals; individuals of the same sex occupy exclusive home ranges but males and females have some overlap (for obvious reasons!). The home ranges can vary from 25–50 ha, just big enough for them to have sufficient termite food supplies, but males can wander further during the breeding season, which is now.

However, the numbats just released in Batalling are not yet sexually mature so should not be dispersing too far... but they are! When young numbats disperse from their natal (birth) home range, they have been known to move as far as 15 km away.

Did you know? Each radio collar has its own transmitting signature. When tracking collared animals each collar's transmitting signal needs to be located separately. This means an officer may be very close to one animal while searching for another. Once animals are located by air the search area is narrowed, but still field staff can have great difficulty with sighting and locating over an area of 25–50 ha.

Update given by Jennifer Harrison, Regional Conservation Officer.

Special excursion prices – Term 2 2006

World Environment Day (WED) is 5 June and EcoEducation will be celebrating it at WDF on Friday 2 June and at MREDC on Tuesday 6 June with all day excursions being charged at \$6.05 per student.

Friday 9 June is Arbor Day, a great day for tree planting.

Book special dates early to secure your preference and avoid disappointment!

Semester Break Professional Learning (PL) 'Christmas in July'

This special event PL will be held at WDF in the mid-semester break. You are invited to come along to relax, recharge and energise at the PL aimed to familiarise you with our opportunities, centres and staff. We can assist you to cover all points of the excursion policy checklist for your excursion management plan, supply curriculum-focused learning materials, and provide insight through practical experience to forest-based learning experiences.

When: 4pm Thursday 20 July til 3pm Friday 21 July.

Cost: just \$77 per teacher or bring a friend and get two places for just \$110 (includes a special festive dinner, accommodation, resources, activities and GST).

Book now with Kristy!

Whole school Professional Learning opportunity

Do you have new staff members? They may not be familiar with EcoEducation and our programs. Why not bring all your staff to one of our idyllic locations in the south-west forest? Contact Janet if your school or department would like to organise an exclusive half-day, whole-day or overnight course, tailored to your individual needs.

Contacting EcoEducation in the South West

For any enquiries, bookings for excursions or PLs please contact Kristy Pengelly, Schools Coordinator, at CALM's Wellington District Office.

Phone: 9735 1909

Fax: 9734 4539

Email: wdf@calm.wa.gov.au

For the development of programs and educational liaison, please contact Janet Date, Project Officer, at CALM's South West Regional Office.

Phone: 9725 4300

Mobile: 0427 980 306

Email: janetD@calm.wa.gov.au

Further resources and information are available from the 'For Schools' section of CALM's NatureBase website at www.naturebase.net/schools.