

Conservation guidelines

By Kathryn Allen

THE Conservation Commission of WA has released the *Interim Guidelines for the Preparation of Management Plans for Terrestrial Conservation Reserves* to ensure conservation reserves are managed as a system, recognising that each reserve, while being a discrete entity, contributes to the whole.

“Managing WA’s conservation reserves is an important responsibility that can always be improved, from planning to on-ground operations,” Conservation Commission Chairman John Bailey said.

The guidelines were a requirement of the *Forest Management Plan 2004–2013*, which encompasses three DEC south-western regions.

“While working to develop the guidelines we recognised they would be useful for reserve management planning across the board and the project was expanded to encompass the entire State,” John said.

Planners in the management planning and regional parks units worked with the Conservation Commission to develop the guidelines.

“The guidelines highlight the links between laws, policies and management to help land managers, planners and the public see how the management fits in the big picture. For example, the guidelines help identify where issues should be considered at a State-wide or landscape ecological scale to ensure that the activities in one reserve complement those in a neighbouring, or even distant, reserve,” John said.

“They should also help improve public understanding of management planning and thus enable them to more effectively contribute during consultation processes, which, in turn, will help to improve how management meets public expectations.

“This is a living document that will be adjusted over time to address new knowledge as well as changes in laws and policies.”

The guidelines are available from www.conservation.wa.gov.au or by contacting Kathryn Allen on 9389 1766.

Post-fire fungi bloom in south-west



DEC's Rod Simmonds with a native bread fungus. Photo – Richard Robinson

JUST two weeks after a wildfire burnt through 166 hectares of 28-year-old karri regrowth south-west of Pemberton, evidence of new life could be found in the area. And so could DEC scientists.

Richard Robinson and Julie Fielder from DEC’s Science Division and Rod Simmonds from the Warren Region visited the area to record the species of fungi that had been stimulated to fruit by the fire.

The group observed three species in particular – the stone maker fungus, native bread and the leathery saw-gill (also called the finger fungus), which commonly appear within the first week after a fire.

The species do not fruit annually or in response to rain, but appear to only fruit following fire.

They are all wood decay fungi that colonise rotting dead roots, stumps or logs. They do not fruit on the rotting wood but from underground structures, called sclerotia.

By Richard Robinson

Each species was abundant in the area and surveying revealed that on average about 5000 leathery saw-gill fruit bodies were present per hectare.

The large fruit bodies of the stone maker and native bread ranged from 20–30 centimetres diameter and the below-ground portion, the sclerotia, were also very large. One specimen of native bread collected weighed 15.75 kilograms.

While bushfires can be destructive, some fungi and other species depend on them to exist. Fungi is one of the first forms of life to respond following fire.

Little information on the biology and ecology of these fungi is available, but ongoing field studies are improving our knowledge.