



Department of Environment and Conservation

Our environment, our future

Funding boost to community environment groups

COMMUNITY environmental and conservation groups throughout Western Australia will receive more than \$1.5 million in grants from the State Government.

The grants are part of a four-year, \$6 million program the Government introduced as part of its election commitments.

Environment Minister Donna Faragher said the grants recognised the enormous contribution community-based organisations made to protecting the State's environment and conserving the nature of WA.

"The majority of grants were for projects sponsored by community and not-for-profit organisations however, private landowners and local governments were also among the recipients," she said.

"More than 280 applications were received and, of those, 140 projects were funded in the first round of the grants program."

Grants were made in seven categories: biodiversity conservation; rescue and

rehabilitation of injured or incapacitated fauna; protection of high value areas by landholders on private lands; regional parks and *Bush Forever* sites; sustainable catchment management; and nature appreciation in natural areas and support

for major conservation and environment organisations.

Among the successful grant recipients were the Dieback Working Group, which received \$25,000 to develop a best practice management framework

for *Phytophthora* dieback disease; the Malleefowl Preservation Group, which received \$20,000 to prepare educational kits; and the City of Canning, which received \$30,000 for the protection of threatened ecological communities and bushland in Queens Park Regional Open Space.

Other projects ranged from city regeneration and catchment stabilisation to awareness raising and nature appreciation programs.

Grant recipients came from as far north as the east Kimberley, south to Esperance and east to the Goldfields.

This year the Department of Health, through the Fiona Stanley Hospital Project, has contributed an additional \$30,000 to encourage groups to become involved in conservation projects in the area surrounding the hospital, or in projects enhancing habitat for Carnaby's black-cockatoo.

A full list of the Environmental Community Grants recipients can be found at www.dec.wa.gov.au/ecg or by phoning (08) 9442 0300.



The Friends of Yellagonga Regional Park group, which received funding for its work with long necked freshwater turtles.

WA fire crews return from Canada

SIX Western Australian bushfire management specialists have returned home after five weeks assisting Canadian authorities with bushfires in British Columbia.



(Left to right) Regional Leader Nature Conservation Anthony Desmond, Regional Planning Officer Aminya Ennis, Fleet Supervisor Allan Jones, Busselton District Manager Greg Mair and FPC Manager Policy and Extension Keith Low.

Published by the Department of Environment and Conservation's Strategic Development and Corporate Affairs Division, Cygnet Hall, (cnr) Mounts Bay Road and Hackett Drive, CRAWLEY,

Western Australia, 6009

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The team – five from DEC and one from the Forest Products Commission (FPC) – were part of a 30-strong Australia-New Zealand (ANZ) contingent which worked on fires in the Kamloops area, 350 kilometres east of Vancouver. The team comprised Greg Mair, DEC Busselton (team leader); Allan Jones and Aminya Ennis, DEC Bunbury; Anthony Desmond, DEC Geraldton; Ed Hatherley, DEC Broome; and Keith Low, FPC Perth.

DEC Director General Keiran McNamara said the crew had been selected for their expertise in managing forest fires.

The crew undertook a range of roles including Incident Controller, Operations, Planning, Logistics, Information, and field divisional commanders.

Keiran said the DEC and FPC officers had been requested through the Victorian Department of Sustainability and Environment which had a mutual aid agreement for critical bushfire emergencies with the Province of British Columbia, Canada Wildfire Management Program, Ministry of Forests and Range.

"Although WA fire managers have been part of ANZ contingents to the United States on five occasions since 2000, this is the first time we have sent personnel to Canada," he said.

"Our people can slot into senior fire management positions in Canada and the US because each country uses the same incident control system.

"There also are many benefits to be gained from direct involvement in managing fires overseas as it enables staff to gain a different perspective in terms of fire behaviour and particularly the logistics associated with combating intense fires in remote country."

Keiran said the ANZ contingent was well received by their Canadian counterparts and the local community.



DEC Perth Hills Fire Coordinator Kevin Pollock.

Fire honour awarded

DEC Perth Hills Fire Coordinator Kevin Pollock's "distinguished service, professionalism and dedication" have been recognised with an Australian Fire Service Medal.

Kevin received the Australian Government Honours List medal from Governor General Ken Michael at a presentation at Government House in Perth on 11 September. He was among 52 recipients from various walks of life across WA and one of only two Australian Fire Service Medal winners from WA.

Kevin's vast range of fire experience spans more than 42 years with DEC and its predecessors. He is only the third department employee to be awarded the medal.

Kevin agreed that it was a great honour to receive the award but said he did not believe he was solely responsible for the accomplishment.

"The award should also be seen as an achievement of my colleagues and their commitment to get a job done," he said.

"I love my work and am completely satisfied with all that it offers.

"The complexity of working in the Perth Hills, with its urban interface, to carry out prescribed burning creates a challenge that ensures complete job satisfaction."

Stokes National Park receives an upgrade

DEC staff are replacing fire and flood-damaged infrastructure at Stokes National Park with new facilities.

Much of the park's infrastructure was destroyed when wildfire swept through the park in November 2006, ruining the campground and walk trails. The damage was compounded in January 2008 when flooding from an event classed 'the storm of the century' wiped out the main access road.

DEC received emergency relief funding for the replacement of the access road in early 2007 and the road was reopened in November 2007.

Stokes National Park Senior Ranger Ian Hughes said the opening of the road paved the way for the park to be re-opened for day use, but no camping could be permitted.

"But in 2008 we received capital funds for the first phase of major works to replace the infrastructure," Ian said.

"With help from DEC's South West Region, which provided a fantastic works crew from the Wellington and Blackwood districts, we were able get the rebuilding phase under way in early 2009.

"We've now installed four camp kitchens and two self registration stations and conducted civil works to enlarge the campsite.

"Phase two of the project will involve the construction of toilets at the campground."

It will be supported by DEC staff from the Wellington, Blackwood and Perth Hills districts.

This phase is expected to be completed by November, enabling the Stokes Inlet camping and day-use area, called Benwenerup, to be reopened for camping by the end of the year – the first time since the 2006 wildfire.

Ian said similar works were starting at Cape Arid National Park, where infrastructure was also damaged in the 2006 fire.



WRG member Brian Clarke measuring the girth of a veteran wandoo at Talbot Brook.

Community call for big wandoos

THE DEC-supported Wandoo Recovery Group (WRG) is on the lookout for large wandoo trees to add to a national register of big trees.

WRG Executive Officer Liz Manning has put a call out to community members to help raise the profile of wandoo, by nominating big trees to the national register online at www.nationalregisterofbigtrees.com.au.

The online tree register was started in May 2009 to help uncover Australia's big trees and beautiful gardens. Together with the help of community groups such as the WRG and Commonwealth and State environment departments, the register will name a national, state and regional 'champion tree' in each species.

Anybody can nominate and measure a tree.

Liz said she observed a lack of wandoo tree entries on the register so was encouraging people to nominate trees growing in their community, on their property, or local park.

"We're hoping to get people involved in measuring trees on their property to raise appreciation and awareness of wandoo," she said.

The WRG was formed in February 2003 in response to community concern about wandoo's failing health.

The group works to better understand the factors affecting wandoo's health and its growth habits and to communicate this knowledge to the general public.

Liz said wandoo was one of the most important tree species for wildlife in south-west WA and could live for 400 years or more.

"Wandoos are slow-growing trees and the growth rate slows as they age further making it difficult to accurately estimate their age," she said.

Wandoo trees are essential to their surrounding ecological communities. Hollows that form in mature wandoo trees are a vital resource for many fauna, with the retention of nest trees critical to the long-term survival of species such as Carnaby's black-cockatoo.

Hollow logs on the ground also provide homes for brushtail possums and chuditch and the foliage and bark support a myriad of insects and invertebrates, making it a good habitat for insectivorous birds.

"Wandoo trees and woodlands are tremendously valuable for the range of benefits they can provide and should be treasured by all Western Australians," she said.

To get involved contact Liz on elizabeth.manning@dec.wa.gov.au or visit the national register of big trees website at www.nationalregisterofbigtrees.com.au.

WA Chief Scientist visits the Kimberley

A MIX of wildfires, joint management, biodiversity and science and EcoEducation were hot topics for WA's Chief Scientist Lyn Beazley's visit to the Kimberley, organised by DEC Program Coordinator State Cane Toad Initiative Corrin Everitt.

Joined by DEC Senior Project Officer – EcoEducation Elaine Horne and Bush Rangers Coordinator Rich Weatherill, Professor Beazley was given a guided tour of works in the Kimberley over four days, including a visit to Ningbing Gorge.

The vast prehistoric Devonian reef system at the Ningbing Range Conservation Reserve provided the perfect setting for DEC Technical Officer – Cane Toads Dave Woods, to provide Professor Beazley with information on fossils, cave systems, fire, joint management, Ningbing biodiversity and results of recent flora surveys undertaken in the area.

Miriuwung Gajerrong Rangers were also on hand to discuss the significance of the area to Aboriginal people and the aspirations of DEC's joint management strategy.

Professor Beazley said the new reserve would help to protect the delicate ecosystems in the Ningbing Range for future generations.

"The Devonian reef system in this area is very culturally significant to all Western Australians and is home to limestone caves that contain unique stygofauna and other remarkable organisms," Professor Beazley said.

"The preservation of the Ningbing and surrounding systems are critically important to the traditional owners, and their protection and management will be a shared responsibility."

Professor Beazley also received presentations on fire management in the

region from Regional Fire Coordinator Ed Hatherley and East Kimberley District Fire Coordinator Nathan Conner. Kimberley Regional Fire Ecologist Dr Ian Radford also spoke on Kimberley fire ecology, research and monitoring and Rangelands Fire Management Planning Officer Trevor Howard discussed greenhouse gas initiatives and capacity building in Aboriginal communities.

On a visit to Kununurra District High School and St Joseph's Primary School to discuss education opportunities, Professor Beazley said it was important to capture the attention of students through interactive and innovation learning programs.

"My visit was part of a wider examination

of potential EcoEducation opportunities in the Kimberley and I was very impressed to see how enthusiastic and science savvy the students in Kununurra were," Professor Beazley said.

"Our future scientists and researchers are at school now and that's why it is so important to encourage students to view science as an interesting and rewarding career option. Interactive programs like these are just one of the tools we use to get students excited about science."

Professor Beazley then joined EcoEducation leaders Elaine and Rich to meet and take a canoe ride with young students making up the newest edition to the Bush Rangers WA program.



DEC's Elaine Horne (left) with Professor Lyn Beazley.

Air quality in the spotlight

STAFF from DEC's Air Quality Management Branch (AQMB) played a big role in the 19th International Clean Air Society of Australia and New Zealand (CASANZ) Clean Air and Environment conference at the Perth Convention Centre in September.

Twelve AQMB staff made presentations to some of the 270 delegates from across the globe.

DEC's Regional Air Strategies Manager and chairwoman of the local conference organising committee, Farah Adeeb, said the conference provided an excellent opportunity to showcase DEC's work.

"We had the opportunity to show the many ways DEC works to improve air quality and educate people about improving air quality," Farah said.

"The conference also enabled DEC staff to network with people from similar positions in different parts of Australia and the world.

"It was also very interesting to listen to these people present and share experiences with them.

"This will help participants move towards more coordinated methods of air quality management and control."

Senior Environmental Officer Lucinda Peters won the Young Achievers Award at the conference for her presentation 'Policy Instrument Relationships within Air Quality Management Frameworks of Large East Asian Cities.'

"I feel very honoured to have been selected as the winner of the Young Achievers Award," Lucinda said.

"I really enjoyed having the opportunity to present my PhD research findings on air quality policy applied in large East Asian cities to the conference delegates.

"The conference was also a great chance for DEC staff to meet individuals from Australia and overseas to discuss air quality management and climate change

policy and programs."

AQMB also had the chance to show off their work at the conference exhibition, with a booth display for the duration of the conference.

CleanRun Behaviour Change Initiative Project Manager Tina Stockport said DEC's new 'eco-drive simulator' was particularly popular.

"This simulator enables people to go on a virtual drive and see how different driving styles have a direct impact on emissions and fuel consumption," Tina said.

AirWatch Manager Fiona Marr and Coordinator Hamish Jacobsen presented the *AirWatch* program in one session, along with six school students who shared their thoughts on their involvement in the school-based education program.

DEC was a silver sponsor for the CASANZ conference and Environment Minister Donna Faragher opened the event.