



Major improvements at Fitzgerald River

SIGNIFICANT progress has been made in the Fitzgerald River National Park improvement project—the single biggest development project ever carried out by DEC in the South Coast Region.

The \$40-million-dollar project has been funded by both state and federal governments and will be delivered by April 2012.

Parks and Visitor Services South Coast Regional Leader Adnaan Abrahams said it had been a busy past eight months for the project, which aimed to improve roads and recreational and tourism infrastructure at both the eastern and western ends of the park.

"This involves sealing about 82 kilometres of road and car parks, as well as the improvement of recreation and visitor facilities such as day-use and camp site infrastructure, lookouts, walkways and camp kitchens," Adnaan said.

"The project also includes the construction of a coastal walk trail between Point Ann and Hamersley Inlet and improvements to recreational facilities at the shire reserve at Hamersley Inlet."

The project team includes a project coordinator, recreation facilities officer, walk trail officer, environmental officer, rangers and other regional DEC staff as well as specialist input from DEC staff in Perth, including from the Recreation, Interpretation and Community Involvement Branch. Main Roads WA is a key partner and service provider in the project.

Adnaan said environmental and heritage management was a critical part of the project, with

special focus on not introducing dieback.

"A comprehensive environmental management plan was compiled for the first stage of the road improvements—informed by detailed flora, fauna, dieback and heritage surveys, visual impact assessment and road designs—and others will follow for the rest of the works," he said.

The *Recreation master plan* has been developed, and concept and detailed development recreation plans are shaping improvements in the eastern part of the park. A total of 16 recreation sites will be redeveloped.

As part of community and stakeholder engagement for the project, a reference group including representatives from the Fitzgerald River National Park Advisory Committee, the shires of Ravensthorpe and Jerramungup, Tourism WA, Main Roads WA and other advocacy groups is advising DEC on the roll-out of the project.

Information such as updates, copies of recreation concept plans, walk trail concept plans and road closure notices can be found at the project's webpage at www.dec.wa.gov.au/frnp.

Adnaan said the Fitzgerald River National Park improvement project had achieved much in a short period.

"Many tasks and plans are firsts for DEC, making it exciting and challenging," he said.

"There is still a lot to be done and with the right approach, team work, commitment and enthusiasm, a successful project will be delivered of which we can all be proud."



Some of the Fitzgerald River improvement project team: (back row, left to right) Albany District PVS Coordinator Luke Coney, Senior Landscape Architect Nathan Greenhill, Senior Architectural Draftsperson Steve Csaba, Landscape Architect Ben Liddel, Landscape Architect Ben Pickering, Interpretation and Visitor Information Coordinator Gil Field, (front row, left to right), PVS Regional Leader South Coast Adnaan Abrahams, Senior Landscape Architect Jeremy Flynn, Project Coordinator Tim Maisey and Landscape Architect Doug Simpson.



New van promotes 'Bash the Trash'!

THE Kalgoorlie-Boulder Urban Landcare Group (KBULG) has launched its new purpose-built educational van, equipped with interactive displays including a worm farm and composting exhibit, an LCD monitor and information materials thanks to funding from the Waste Authority's Community Grants Scheme (CGS).

The new van was funded by a \$20,000 CGS grant and will help deliver the 'Reduce-Reuse-Recycle' message to remote communities throughout the Goldfields. KBULG co-ordinator David Gleeson said he was pleased to receive the funding.

"The money has helped us provide a fantastic resource for our region to showcase the 'Reduce-Reuse-Recycle' message with the ultimate goal of reducing the amount of waste going to our local landfill," Mr Gleeson said.

"The 'Bash the Trash' project is extremely interactive, innovative and fun and is a great way to educate the community about the waste cycle and the benefits of recycling."

The van was officially launched by Environment Minister Donna Faragher during a visit to Kalgoorlie-Boulder.

"This van is part of KBULG's 'Bash the Trash' program, which is a broader waste management initiative that aims to raise awareness about the benefits of recycling while educating, engaging and encouraging locals to take action towards waste reduction in the community," Mrs Faragher said.

The Minister acknowledged the group's ongoing dedication in the region to helping spread the recycling message to surrounding and remote communities.

"The team at KBULG has again taken environmental education to a new level in order to encourage residents, businesses and schools to adopt and implement positive waste management practices," she said.

Visit the Waste Authority's website www.zerowastewa.com.au for more information on the Community Grants Scheme.



Staff and students from O'Connor Primary School with Environment Minister Donna Faragher (centre) and KBULG co-ordinator David Gleeson (far right)

Walpole Fire Mosaic on the big screen



A Walpole Fire Mosaic Project team member extracts invertebrates from a pitfall trap

THE outdoor classroom of the Valley of the Giants Tree Top Walk has provided the perfect backdrop for screenings of Walpole Fire Mosaic—a 15-minute film currently showing near Walpole.

The film depicts the story of fire in the forest and reveals the science behind efforts to recreate ancient burn patterns with mosaic burning in the area.

DEC senior principal research scientist Dr Neil Burrows said the Walpole Fire Mosaic Project team was investigating whether the resulting patchwork left a variety of habitats that benefited the diversity of both flora and fauna while also reducing the damaging impacts of wildfires.

"Regular burning to create smaller patches means that, at landscape scales, habitat is diversified across areas and through time," Neil said.

"This results in greater opportunity for animals, big and small, to escape to a nearby patch that meets their requirements and to be able to recolonise a burnt area from a nearby unburnt patch after fire.

"Research so far has shown invertebrates in particular benefit from this fire regime."

The Walpole Fire Mosaic Project has been running in the Walpole area for six years and combines the expertise of DEC scientists from several disciplines, PhD students, volunteers and DEC operational staff. It has also given work experience opportunities to university students both from Australia and overseas.

Test sites are located in the Walpole-Nornalup National Park and the research includes testing three vegetation types with three fire regimes: standard practice of regular fuel reduction burning, no burning, and fire mosaic, or patch-burning.

The project used modern landscape analysis techniques to create maps of fire impacts that included satellite imagery, digital imaging and geographic information system technology to enable scientists to pinpoint specific areas for field investigation.

As well as telling the story of fire in the environment, the film will outline the aims, methods and outcomes of the Walpole Fire Mosaic Project.

Senior Research Scientist wins Best Paper Award

SENIOR Research Scientist Shaun Wilson of DEC's Marine Science Program has won an award for the best paper submitted to the journal Coral Reefs for 2009.

Coral Reefs is the official journal of the International Society for Coral Reef Studies and each year the publication's editorial board votes to choose the best paper. Shaun and his associate researchers have been awarded a certificate, a glass trophy and a cash prize of 1,000 euros.

The paper, entitled *Maintenance of fish diversity on disturbed coral reefs*, used 11 years of data collected by the Australian Institute of Marine Science to assess the impact of high coral death on fish from the Great Barrier Reef.

Shaun said the study showed that although coral loss can be substantial on reefs, the effect on diversity of reef fish may be negligible.

"This is because the fish communities change to reflect shifts in habitat," Shaun said.

"The composition will change, but the number of species will essentially remain the same.



Senior Research Scientist Shaun Wilson displaying a copy of his paper and the Best Paper Award certificate

"The exception is when coral skeletons breakdown and the structure of the reef becomes less complex. Under this scenario diversity can be lost."

Shaun said the findings had applications in terms of understanding what may happen to coral reefs within Western Australian marine parks.

"The results assist in

predicting the impact of damage from any disturbance that results in extensive coral loss and suggests how we best assess the effects of these disturbances," he said.

Shaun is leading DEC's research programs relating to tropical marine management, specifically in the region from Ningaloo Marine Park and northwards.

Plans released for public comment

A NUMBER of draft and finalised plans have recently been released, seeking public comment and shaping management and strategic planning in areas across Western Australia.

On Friday 3 September, Environment Minister Donna Faragher released the *South Coast draft regional marine strategic plan 2010*. The south coast marine region comprises more than 1.75 million hectares of state waters and covers some 2,600 kilometres of coastline, from Augusta to the South Australian border.

The draft strategic plan is available for public comment for a period of three months. A report to the Minister for Environment titled *Oceans of Opportunity: a Proposed Strategic Framework for Marine Waters of Western Australia's South Coast* has also been released as a supporting document.

Public submissions close on Friday 3 December 2010. At the close of the public comment period, a final strategic plan will be prepared in the light of submissions received. Comments on the draft South Coast regional marine strategic plan can be submitted using the online form on the Regional Marine Planning website, by email (planning@dec.wa.gov.au) or by post.

To view the draft strategic plan, supporting report or for more information, visit <http://rmp.dec.wa.gov.au/> or contact Ian Herford on (08) 9842 4500 or ian.herford@dec.wa.gov.au.

Also now available for public comment is the draft management plan for Ord River and Parry Lagoons nature reserves, which was released on Tuesday 14 September.

The nature reserves are found in the East Kimberley region, with Ord River

Nature Reserve featuring vast areas of mudflats, mangrove communities and a maze of tidal creeks. Great numbers of waterbirds are a feature of Parry Lagoons Nature Reserve, along with a variety of important habitats including freshwater springs, components of rainforest, grasslands, woodland, rugged sandstone and floodplain.

The *Ord River and Parry Lagoons nature reserves draft management plan 2010* may be viewed and downloaded from DEC's website at www.dec.wa.gov.au/haveyoursay or obtained in hard copy from DEC's Kensington office and Kimberley Regional Office in Kununurra. Public submissions can be made via post, online, or emailed to planning@dec.wa.gov.au. The closing date for public submissions is 17 November 2010.

The *Cape Range National Park management plan 2010* was also released recently, on 31 August.

The park is an outstanding conservation and recreation asset providing an important gateway to Ningaloo Marine Park. Together these magnificent natural assets, which have been earmarked for possible World Heritage listing, are recognised among the nation's most valued conservation, recreation and tourism areas.

The management plan includes strategies that will guide DEC's management of the area's key values over the next 10 years.

For more information or for copies of the management plan visit www.dec.wa.gov.au/landmanagementplanning or contact Acting Planning and Estate Branch Manager Paul McCluskey on (08) 9334 0598 or paul.mccluskey@dec.wa.gov.au.



Partnerships help keep Yanchep National Park beautiful

DEC recently joined Keep Australia Beautiful WA (KAB), Woodside and Volunteering WA (VWA) to conduct a clean-up of Yanchep National Park and mark Australia Beautiful Week.



Staff members from DEC and Woodside teaming up to tidy up roadside litter.

The joint effort saw more than 120 volunteers and staff roll up their sleeves to remove hundreds of bags of litter from the park boundaries and kilos of weeds throughout the park during the day-long clean-up.

Keep Australia Beautiful WA chair Mel Hay said the improvements to the look of and safety of the national park were incredible and praised Woodside staff for volunteering to be part of the clean-up.

"This is a great example of how business volunteers can contribute to environmental projects and can make a big difference in a short time. It was also pleasing to see the enthusiasm and enjoyment from the volunteers and the sense of pride that came from what was achieved," he said.

"To take the litter collection one step further and separate the recyclables, improves the positive environmental impact, which is a fantastic effort."

Keep Australia Beautiful Week, August 23–28, 2010, reminded Australians to recycle reusable waste, particularly when out and about in the community.

Mr Hay said recycling facilities in public areas are increasing and more and more Australians are taking action on the country's litter problem, which costs hundreds of thousands of dollars each year to clean-up.

Findings from the Keep Australia Beautiful National Litter Index 08/09 show non-specific litter produced the most litter by volume, followed by beverage containers at 32.2 per cent of the total litter stream. Cigarette butts produce the most litter by item, followed by non-specified litter and beverage containers ranking third at 6.2 per cent.

Communities seeking information on litter management are urged to contact Keep Australia Beautiful WA on 6467 5122 or visit www.kabc.wa.gov.au.



From Left: Maureen Maher (KAB), Julia Coggins (DEC), Jodi Rigby (Woodside), Heather Beswick (DEC) and Margaret Andrews (VWA).

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