



Walpole-Nornalup National Park celebrates 100 years

FRANKLAND District DEC staff and community members from the towns of Walpole and Nornalup banded together to celebrate the centenary of Walpole-Nornalup National Park earlier this month.

One hundred years ago, a small area of land located along the Frankland River was set aside for conservation by the Minister for Lands and Agriculture James Mitchell.

James and his ministerial party made their way to the south-west in search of land to develop for agriculture, timber production and dairying. However, upon boating up the Frankland River, James was said to be overcome by the grandeur and beauty of the river and surrounding karri forest, which led him to the decision to set aside 370 hectares as 'Class A' reserve.

Never would he have imagined that 100 years later the park would grow to more than 19,000 hectares, or that his granddaughter, great granddaughter and descendants of members of his ministerial party would be making the same trip up the Frankland River in his honour.

The boat trip was organised as part of the Walpole-Nornalup National Park centenary celebration which was held on Saturday 2 October at Nornalup Settlers Park. Descendants of Sir James Mitchell, Harry F Johnston, Neil McNeil and Tom Yeo, along with representatives of the Royal Western Australian

Historical Society made their way to Monastery Landing where a new interpretive panel was unveiled by Hon Barry House MLC.

DEC District Interpretation Officer Christie Mahony said over 140 people were estimated to have attended a community celebration which followed at the Nornalup Community Centre.

"The event was coordinated by DEC staff who have worked closely with members of the Walpole-Nornalup and Districts Historical Society, the Walpole-Nornalup National Parks Association and several other community representatives. Planning for the event started several months prior and culminated in a fantastic day of celebration," she said.

"Official proceedings started with a Welcome to Country by local Noongar representative Wayne Webb who acknowledged both ancestors and current custodians of the land.

"The story of the founding of the Walpole-Nornalup National Park was told through a slideshow put together by the Walpole-Nornalup and Districts Historical Society accompanied by old-time music played on a gramophone.

"Judith Crossland, granddaughter of Sir James Mitchell and Berta Von Bibra, granddaughter of Harry Johnston paid tribute to their grandfathers who have had great influence on our state. The speeches were followed by performances by Walpole



DEC staff, descendants from the 1910 ministerial party and spouses, representatives from the Royal Western Australian Historical Society, and representatives from the Walpole-Nornalup National Parks Association and WOW Wilderness EcoCruises.

Primary School students and the 'Circle of Song' choir."

DEC Frankland District Manager Allison Donovan said that the national park centenary was a great success and a fantastic celebration of community.

"The event displayed great passion and pride for our national park and was a great tribute

to the foresight of our state's forefathers," she said.

"It was an incredible honour to have the direct descendants of the original 1910 ministerial party attend the event and be involved in the park's celebration.

"A great amount of gratitude goes to all involved."



Record number of calls to Wildcare Helpline

DEC's Wildcare Helpline has received a record number of calls over the past year. During the 2009–10 financial year, a substantial 10,000 calls were received from people seeking advice about sick, injured or orphaned native animals.

DEC's Community Involvement Coordinator Hugh Maclean said the helpline, which is run by dedicated volunteers, provided advice to callers and arranged wildlife rehabilitators to assist with the recovery and release of the animals.

"Calls to the helpline have grown from fewer than 3,000 a year in 2002–03 to around 10,000 last year," Hugh said.

"It demonstrates that people are more conscious about wildlife in their area and are more willing to help if they see a native animal in distress."

The increased figures are a promising sign to those interested in the conservation of Western Australia's native wildlife.

The most common reasons for calls to the helpline were related to distressed, injured or

aggressive birds, followed by animals hit by cars, affected by disease, trapped, orphaned or abandoned at a young age, or those that posed a threat to humans and pets.

"Of the 9,914 calls received by the Wildcare Helpline, 5,441 were for birds, 1,941 for mammals, 1,418 for snakes, 521 for other reptiles, 35 for amphibians, and more than 500 were for other enquiries," Hugh said.

Volunteers are central to the operation of the Wildcare Helpline. Twenty-eight volunteers ensure the phones are staffed 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

"The service would not be possible without the dedicated team of volunteers who make a big difference in providing advice and arranging refuge for sick, injured and orphaned wildlife in Western Australia," Hugh said.

The Wildcare Helpline number is (08) 9474 9055. To find out more or to become a volunteer, visit the [Wildcare Helpline page](#) on the DEC website.



Volunteer Doreen McCallum cares for a baby brushtail possum at the Wildcare Helpline evaluation meeting at Kensington in September. Doreen has been a volunteer with DEC since 1997.

Celebrating volunteers

DEC's Community Involvement Unit is seeking nominations for the department's annual Volunteer Awards. The awards, celebrated at a formal event in early December, provide an opportunity to recognise individual volunteers, and also celebrate the tremendous work provided to the public by volunteers through DEC's volunteer programs.

There are two categories – Volunteer of the Year and Outstanding Service Awards – and nominations may be made by individuals, DEC staff, other stakeholder agencies, or member associations or community groups that have benefited from the nominee's efforts.

Nominations should include brief details of the activities completed by the person nominated, why they are exceptional or outstanding in their volunteer work, and contact details of both the person submitting the nomination and the volunteer concerned. For more information contact Community Involvement Coordinator Hugh Maclean on (08) 9334 0468.

Nominations should be sent to Hugh Maclean, DEC, Locked Bag 104, Bentley Delivery Centre, WA 6983 or emailed to community.involvement@dec.wa.gov.au.

Closing date for nominations is 6 November 2010.



Bush Ranger cadets put the royal in Perth Royal Show

THIS year's Bush Rangers WA Perth Royal Show exhibit provided high school students the opportunity to interact with and demonstrate to the public, the techniques and conservation projects they've undertaken as Bush Rangers Cadets.

DEC Bush Rangers Program Coordinator Hannah Hampson joined students from Emmanuel Catholic College, Kolbe Catholic College, Rossmoyne Senior High School, Mount Lawley Senior High School and Dale Christian School, and said the cadets were kept busy carrying out set tasks for the duration of the eight-day event.

"Our cadet duties included greeting, assisting and keeping track of visitors through the conservation and landcare exhibit, watering plants and maintaining pathways, communicating to the public about the Bush Ranger Program and projects they are involved in and assisting the public in the exhibit's various water-related activities," Hannah said.

"The demonstrations included a catchment model that showed where pollution ends up in our waterways, an erosion model comparing different soils and salinity activities, including tasting different concentrations of salt and looking at how plants extract water—dipping a celery stick in food dye and watching how it is drawn up.

"The cadets also demonstrated survival techniques such as wrapping a plastic bag over the leaves of a tree to collect transpired water."

EcoEducation Senior Project Officer Elaine Horne said the cadets took their duties in their stride.

"I have never seen cadets so busy as at this year's show. For five minutes of every half hour they were rushing off to count visitors. I attended on the last day of the show and the cadets had done a great job of looking after the conservation and landcare exhibit. Well done to all those involved," she said.

Scientists converge on new WA Conservation Science Centre

DEC's recently completed WA Conservation Science Centre was unveiled to more than 200 scientists from across the country at last month's Australian Network for Plant Conservation's (ANPC) eighth national conference.

DEC Acting Director of Science and ANPC vice president Dr David Coates said the conference, which this year focussed on 'planning conservation to achieving restoration', was a unique opportunity to share information in the impressive new facility.

"The conference has attracted delegates from various institutions around Australia who bring experience and expertise in wide ranging areas of plant conservation," he said.

"It provides a valuable opportunity for Western Australian participants to learn from our interstate colleagues and to share our own discoveries with them.

"We were fortunate to welcome Professor Richard Hobbs from the University of Western Australia and Dr Kingsley Dixon from the Botanic Gardens and Parks Authority as keynote speakers on issues of plant conservation in relation to a changing world and new innovation in ecology.

"We also have the opportunity to showcase the work that we have been doing around Perth through a number of field trips on the Swan Coastal Plain, the Darling Range and the north-eastern woodlands as part of the conference."

ANPC is a not-for-profit organisation based in Canberra that aims to promote and develop plant conservation in Australia. ANPC president Bob Makinson said it was great to bring the conference back to Western Australia for the first time since 1995.

"Support from WA has been very strong over the years and we were keen to gain a better knowledge of the plant conservation research and projects taking place through DEC and other WA agencies," he said.



Scientists gathered in the WA Conservation Science Centre for the Australian Network for Plant Conservation's welcome ceremony.

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Boardwalk a bonus for birds and visitors alike

A NEW boardwalk on Penguin Island Conservation Park has been opened, completing a series of boardwalks enabling safe and easy access for visitors around the island. The boardwalk offers visitors breathtaking views from the island's southern lookout and allows east-west pedestrian access on the southern end of the island.

Environment Minister Donna Faragher visited the popular park in Shoalwater Islands Marine Park south of Perth last month to officially open the boardwalk. She was joined by DEC staff and Penguin Island volunteers.

Swan Coastal District Parks and Visitor Services Coordinator Shawn Debono said planning for the \$305,000 boardwalk began in 2008, following recognition of a range of environmental and visitor risk issues.

"There was no existing boardwalk—only a sand walk trail—and this was creating erosion issues, dune blowouts and sand slippage," Shawn said.

"The vegetation was being impacted on and seabird nesting habitat was also at threat of disturbance.

"The new boardwalk provides safe access to the southern lookout which offers 360 degree views of the island, back to the mainland and out across the spectacular seascapes of the surrounding marine park."

The boardwalk is about 180 metres long. The decking is made of fibreglass reinforced plastic, a relatively new product to be used by the department, and is extremely durable and low maintenance.

A number of DEC staff were involved in the design and construction of the boardwalk.

"Particular recognition should go to District Landscape Architect and Project Manager Sara Padgett who designed the boardwalk and was instrumental in leading and coordinating the construction," Shawn said.

"The construction team from Jarrahdale was also fantastic, especially given the significant logistical challenges of the project. Working on a small and environmentally sensitive island required careful planning and unique material transportation techniques—such as delivering construction materials by helicopter."

The project also included an interpretive component, with new signage being installed on the boardwalk as well as elsewhere around the island.

The opening of the boardwalk followed the reopening of the island on 15 September, after its three-month winter closure.

Penguin Island supports the largest colony of little penguins on the west coast of Australia and is one of the state's premier ecologically sustainable nature-based tourism destinations, with some 90,000 visits to the island during the past tourist season.



(From left) DEC interpretation officers Tania Marchesani and Erin Biggs and Penguin Island volunteers Maureen and David Toon-Poynton with Environment Minister Donna Faragher (second from left) on the new boardwalk.

Fun and adventure with the DEC school holiday round up

FROM underground caving, to sand sculpting, to a large blow-up ant, a wide variety of exciting activities were held across the state during the October school holidays, engaging kids in fun ways to learn and interact with our environment.

Kimberley Coastal Capers snapped up in Broome

The 'Kimberley Coastal Capers' school holiday program proved to be a big hit to Broome locals and visitors alike.

Budding photographers snapped incredible shots and amateur anglers cast in their lines. Whales and shorebirds performed on cue to the delight of participants, while the community art mural provoked thought on the impact of marine debris.

A reptile talk saw snakes slithering through many sets of eager hands. Kids got creative making t-shirts and fish kites, while mangrove and coastal communities were explored on foot. Face painting and a marine movie gave welcome relief from the heat.

The sand sculpting competition saw families pitted against each other in the quest for glory and great prizes. Our third place team sculpted a crocodile and a shark. Come

judging time, Miss 7 declared the crocodile a girl, prompting Miss 6 to declare the shark a girl as well. Mister 4 was quite adamant that "They can't all be girls you know!"

Yanchep underground adventure a sell out!

Yanchep National Park's spring school holiday program was a great success with Adventure Caving and Funky Fossils the two programs on offer.

Adventure Caving guides Inga Price and Peta Boltz lead the groups into Yonderup and Yanchep caves for an underground experience they will never forget with the only light source being torchlight. All eight groups of Adventure Caving were sold out well before the start of the school holidays.

It just goes to show how popular caving really is for kids!

The Funky Fossils activity was run twice with one being sold out, and the other close to capacity. A fun experience was had by all!

Ants, invaders and campfires with N2N's Splendid Spring activity program

From 'Rambling with a Ranger' to 'Surviving - Where Eagles Dare', from Canoeing Capers to Adventurous Caving



Adventure Caving guide Inga Price leading a group underground

and from being a 'BrilliANT', a Baby Bush Bird or simply Goin' Batty, the Nearer to Nature (N2N) Splendid Spring activity program had something to offer everyone.

A total of 32 sessions were held during the spring school holidays, from six locations across the Swan Region.

Activities were a mix of the old and the new, along with a considerable amount of revamped props and content.

Two new activities were launched BrilliAnts and Bush Invaders. In BrilliANTS an old dome tent frame, some polystyrene food and a blow up ant all helped to create a message of teamwork and nature's recyclers. Albeit at times the blow up ant came very close to being a flattened ant by some very excited children.

The annual 'Around the Campfire' activity was held at the Perth Hills and the audience was treated to some good ol' Aussie yarns by The Wandering Man.

Also, in conjunction with Perth Zoo, N2N ran a couple of spotlighting sessions from John Forrest and Woodman Point with the results contributing to the national wildlife monitoring database.



Baby bush birds – Caroline showing her own baby birds nest

The Bush, bikes, babies 'n' brunch, a joint activity of N2N and MBF, once again proved to be a winner.

Feedback from participants was positive across the board with many saying they are looking forward to seeing what N2N will be offering in summer.



Children's nature photography workshop in Broome