



Celebrating the 2010 volunteers of the year

ON Friday 19 November, 18 dedicated volunteers were recognised by the then Environment Minister Donna Faragher and DEC for their outstanding service, dedication and commitment to environment and conservation.

The event was staged for the first time in the new Conservation Science Centre at DEC's Kensington office. The central atrium was transformed into a five-star venue for morning tea, complemented by the soaring ceilings and stimulating public art.

More impressive, however, were the quiet achievers being recognised at Volunteer of the Year Awards 2010.

Twenty-one year's service has allowed Margaret Brims to support the WA Herbarium and become a state expert on the recognition of daisy specimens. Margaret is also now the expert curator of the herbarium's slime mould collection and recognised by her peers throughout Australia for this work.

Similar recognition was provided to Christine Hollister who has developed more than 1,700 computer keys to aid identification of plant species. Chris has contributed the equivalent of 7.5 years

full-time service over the past 14 years.

The final Volunteer of the Year Award was presented to Fred and Jean Hort, nominated by Perth Hills Fire Conservation Officer Michael Pasotti.

"Fred and Jean's detailed knowledge of flora populations and the impacts of management operations—such as fire—on these populations in the Perth Hills is of huge benefit to the department," Michael said.

Fred and Jean were also recognised for their work with invertebrates.

These volunteers are noted for their persistence, reliability and exceptionally high standard of work. After judging had been completed, it was identified that Fred and Jean had also won similar awards in 2000 and 2005.

Outstanding Service Awards were presented to Frank Bilki and John Morris, volunteers at DEC's Perth Observatory, Brenda and Ashley Tenbroeke, who coordinate specialist callouts to members of the Animal Control Agents (ACA) group (part of the Wildcare Helpline service), and Shirley Oliver from the Swan River Trust's River Guardians program.

Outstanding Service Awards were

also received by John Hardman, Wendy Nelson and Charmaine Harris from the Bibbulmun Track Foundation, Pat Angel, who has provided the equivalent of more than three years curatorial work at the WA Herbarium, and Bernice Greenlees from the Wildlife Science Library.

Leanne Robb from the Munda Biddi Trail Foundation was also recognised with an Outstanding Service Award, as were the Yanchep National Park volunteer guides for their contribution and enthusiasm which make visitors' bushwalks a memorable experience, and Michael Filby from the Keep Australia Beautiful Adopt-a-Spot program. For the past six years, Michael has cleared 500 bags of rubbish each year from highway verges near Walpole.

DEC Community Involvement Coordinator Hugh Maclean said he had been involved with volunteers in his work and personal capacities for many years and details supporting the nominations had been astonishing and humbling.

"Commitment, dedication, passion, excellence, kindness, tenacity and



Two of the three Volunteer of the Year award winners, Margaret Brims (left) and Christine Hollister, with Outstanding Service Award recipient Pat Angel, all of whom volunteer at the WA Herbarium.

generosity are just a few of the words which begin to describe these individuals," he said.

The diversity of nominations made judging difficult but it is a happy coincidence that this year's recipients all had a close connection with the specialist work of the Conservation

Science Centre, specifically the WA Herbarium.

Nominations for 2011 awards will be requested in early October. Volunteers should be registered as DEC volunteers and supported by staff or programs noted in the DEC directory.



Native frogs' unfair wrap

THE recent discovery of a cane toad in the garden of a Bayswater residence sparked a flood of mistaken identity reports to DEC officers and Wildcare, prompting calls for Western Australians to become more familiar with their native frogs.

DEC State Cane Toad Initiative Program Coordinator Corrin Everitt said reports investigated following the find involved the native motorbike frog, western banjo, hooting frog, moaning frog and the crawling toadlet.

"Some of our native frogs are the same colour and have similar-looking skin, so it's easy to make the mistake," she said.

DEC Wildlife Officer Allan Madgwick attended the residence to collect the large adult cane toad, which had been captured by the occupant after she discovered it in her garden and reported it to the Department of Agriculture and Food's Pest and Disease Information Service.

Allan said DEC and the Department of Agriculture and Food were working together to trace the pathway of the toad.

"We're investigating all possibilities—the cane toad must have been transported from a population in Queensland, northern New South Wales, the Northern Territory or the east Kimberley," he said.

"It is likely the toad has hitch-hiked on a vehicle, but the resident who found the toad in her yard is not aware of any vehicles from interstate or northern WA that may have stopped at her property.

"The resident who discovered the cane toad should be praised for her quick response in capturing the toad and alerting authorities."

All cane toad sightings should be reported to the cane toad hotline on 1800 084 881 (freecall).

For more information about cane toads visit www.dec.wa.gov.au/canetoads.



Deputy Director General Robert Atkins, Regional Manager of Westfield Western Australia Malcolm Reed, and Director of Corporate Affairs, Coca-Cola Amatil and chair of the Australian Packaging Covenant Alec Wagstaff, at the launch of Westfield's in-store recycling depot program.

Recycling encouraged at WA shopping centres

A NEW in-store recycling depot program focusing on beverage containers has begun in three major Westfield shopping centres in WA—Carousel, Whitford City and Innaloo—thanks to funding from the Waste Authority.

This initiative, in partnership with the Australian Packaging Covenant, the Australian Food and Grocery Council Packaging Stewardship Forum, Coca-Cola and the Government of Western Australia, is an Australian first and supports the WA government's Public Place Recycling Campaign.

DEC Deputy Director General, Environment Robert Atkins represented the Minister for Environment at the official launch and said that the infrastructure, which is being rolled out nationally, will divert more than 675 tonnes of beverage containers from landfill each year.

"That is enough containers to fill nine Olympic-sized swimming pools with recyclable material each year," Robert said.

"Bottles and cans are some of the easiest items to recycle and represent packaging that required significant investment in their creation, both in terms of energy consumed and greenhouse emissions.

"They can also remain in the environment for extremely long periods without breaking down. Anything that reclaims these items for re-use is to be encouraged," he said.

The national Public Place Recycling initiative is aimed at educating and encouraging shoppers to help the environment, one can or bottle at a time. Westfield have also established an engaging consumer promotion to accompany the recycling roll-out, to demonstrate the environmental impact that recycling even a single PET, aluminium can or glass bottle has on the environment. Shoppers are being asked to 'do the right thing' and use the right bin.

For more information on this program and the Australian Packaging Covenant, visit the Waste Authority's website www.zerowastewa.com.au.



Final management plan released for Rockingham Lakes Regional Park

THE final management plan for Rockingham Lakes Regional Park was recently released, protecting a network of environmentally significant lands containing coastal, wetlands and upland ecosystems.

The park, which covers an area of 4,270 hectares, is located within the City of Rockingham, about 39 kilometres south of Perth.

The plan was released by the then Environment Minister Donna Faragher who said the park had extremely high nature conservation values and provided the local community with a unique opportunity to enjoy the natural environment.

"The park protects two threatened ecological communities; thrombolites at Lake Richmond and sedgeland in Holocene dune swales. Both of these communities are listed as critically endangered in Western Australia," she said.

"The occurrence of thrombolites, which are a basic microbial structure originating at least 600 million years ago, is not only a rare natural phenomenon, it also represents a record of ancient life on Earth.

"The sedgeland in Holocene dune swales in the park are also significant features representing an evolving coastal

environment, which offer a unique opportunity for research into the history of sea level change and coastal wetland development.

"The landforms and vegetation assemblages of the Rockingham-Becher Plain are unique and of international importance. The park preserves an important remnant of this plain."

DEC Manager Regional Parks Branch Brendan Dooley said the plan outlined the overarching approach for the protection and enhancement of the park's nature conservation, recreation, cultural and landscape values.

"I recognise that a considerable period of time has elapsed since the draft management plan was released for public comment in 2003. The delay in preparing the final management plan in no way diminishes the value of the contributions made by any organisation or individual," he said.

"DEC is can now proceed with managing the park in conjunction with the City of Rockingham on the basis of an agreed management plan which was prepared with extensive community input."

The park is used for a variety of recreational activities such as walking, cycling and picnicking, particularly at Cape Peron. It adjoins Shoalwater Islands Marine Park, which provides opportunities for swimming, snorkelling and fishing. Lake Walyungup is also a popular location for model aeroplane and land yacht sailing activities in summer.

The lands comprising the park also have cultural significance for Aboriginal people, and contain heritage places relating to the defence of WA during World War II.

Conservation Commission chair Mrs Barblett thanked the Rockingham Lakes Regional Park Community Advisory Committee, which also provided significant input into the management plan.

"The advisory committee has been instrumental in preparing the plan. The work of its members has shaped the document into a community-based plan and the commission appreciates their effort and commitment," Pat said.

To view a copy of the plan, visit www.dec.wa.gov.au/landmanagementplanning.

Hot Rods in the Park a huge success

Over 3,000 people were treated to a smorgasbord of classic vehicles when they attended Yanchep National Park's annual 'Hot Rods in the Park' on Sunday 14 November.

Stalls provided attendees with a wealth of local and Australian-made products to experience, as did a bouncy castle for the kids and sausage sizzle, which proved popular with those not wanting to stray too far from the action.

Park Manager Alison Pritchard said free entry to the park had a positive impact on event numbers.

"Free park entry as part of the Rediscover Parks initiative was a huge success, doubling the number of visitors to this year's event and tripling the

number of visitors of previous Sundays," she said.

"It was extremely rewarding to see visitors who hadn't been to the park for years, rediscover the treasure that lays on their door step."

Other free activities included koala talks and an Aboriginal experience, making for a great day for all visitors to the park.

Jeff Hitchin's from Perth's Goodfellas Hot Rod club said the park provided the perfect setting for visitors to get up close and personal with the hot rods.

"With no restricted access, fans were able to get up close to the cars and see the meticulous attention to detail that their owners put into building these fantastic vehicles," he said.



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New camp sites for Karijini National Park



Staff from DEC's Walpole District work on upgrading the Mt Minnie homestead as part of the Remote Regions Nature Conservation Program.

DEC has opened 44 new camping bays at Karijini National Park, as part of ongoing upgrades to conservation and tourism infrastructure in the Pilbara.

DEC Pilbara Region Senior Operations Officer Geoff Passmore said the new camping bays at Warlu Loop were connected by paths to the popular camp site at Dales Recreation Area, where facilities include toilets, picnic areas and barbecues.

"The addition of Warlu Loop, which forms part of six existing loops, will cater for large vehicles and group campers who until now

had to use an overflow camp site 12 kilometres away," Geoff said.

DEC has also recently upgraded the homestead at Mt Minnie, a former pastoral lease near Onslow that was purchased by the government for conservation.

"The improved caretaker facilities include a new homestead roof, verandah, ceilings, internal walls and doors," Geoff said.

"The caretaker carries out various activities on behalf of DEC, including fire management and feral animal control at Mt Minnie and Cane River Conservation Park, which enhances the department's ability to uphold its management

and good neighbour responsibilities in this remote area."

Both Pilbara projects were part of the Remote Regions Nature Conservation Program, where DEC employees with primary roles in the south-west visit remote regions to help implement on-ground parks and visitor services, nature conservation and infrastructure initiatives.

Four conservation employees from DEC's Walpole District worked at Mt Minnie for three weeks, while the Warlu Loop work was completed by four conservation employees from DEC's Swan Region over a two-week period.

New enclosure protects critically endangered woylies

THE chances of survival for the endangered woylie have been boosted by the release of 16 of the marsupials into a new 420-hectare predator-free enclosure in the state's south-west.

DEC's Warren Region Nature Conservation Regional Leader Brad Barton said translocations began on 8 November and will continue through mid December.

"On 5 November the electric hot-wire woylie fence was turned on, signalling the end of 11 months of construction," he said.

"Prior to completing the fence, a muster was conducted to remove large macropods. Over 150 staff and volunteers assisted us on the day, walking in a line through the sanctuary to successfully move kangaroos and emus out in front of the line.

"The Science Division cat control team undertook two weeks of monitoring and cat control within the sanctuary, with no sign or

capture of cats to report. This monitoring will be ongoing through use of remote cameras and sand pads."

Over the past two weeks, woylie translocations have been conducted in the upper Warren area.

Forty-five woylies have been captured throughout 90 kilometres of transects and 1,800 trap nights. Of the 45, 16 woylies were deemed suitable for translocation to Perup Sanctuary, while six were sent to a disease research centre in Malaga and one to the Perth Zoo. Woylies deemed not suitable were released at their capture site.

"Next week another four transects will be run and a fourth week is planned from 6 to 10 December. A fifth week of trapping is also likely to reach translocation targets and will take place from 13 to 17 December," Brad said.

The then Environment Minister Donna Faragher said the woylies translocated into the sanctuary would be joined in the coming

months by up to 40 others to form the basis of a prime population, expected to breed to about 400 animals over the next six to 11 years.

"It is hoped this new population will not only be protected from feral predators but also enable scientists to enhance our understanding of what has caused the woylies to decline and help bring them back from the brink of extinction," Mrs Faragher said.

The \$1.5 million in state government funding to establish the woylie insurance population at Perup Sanctuary includes \$500,000 from the government's Natural Resource Management program as well as \$100,000 from Perth Zoo to facilitate both the Perup and Perth Zoo captive populations.

Key collaborators in the project include experts at Murdoch University, Perth Zoo, Australian Wildlife Sanctuary, South Australian Department of Environment and Heritage, and The University of Western Australia.



DEC Senior Technical Officer Chris Bellios with one of the woylie released into the enclosure.

