



Greater protection for internationally significant WA conservation reserves

A DRAFT management plan to protect 106,900 hectares of parks and reserves between the towns of Boyup Brook, Bridgetown, Frankland and Manjimup has just been released.

Launched by the Minister of Environment on 31 March, the *Perup draft management plan 2011* will protect natural and cultural values, while at the same time providing for the enjoyment and sustainable use of the area by the community.

Planning Officer Paul Roberts said that Perup is recognised as one of the most important areas for native fauna conservation in WA.

"This area has immense flora and fauna conservation importance as it is one of the last remaining strongholds of the threatened woylie, numbat, tammar wallaby, Muir's corella, Australasian bittern and Balston's pygmy perch. The parks also contain the largest known wambenger (phascogale) population in the state" said Paul.

"The new 420-hectare predator-free enclosure at the Perup Sanctuary will play a vital role in protecting the critically-endangered woylie from the threat of feral cats and foxes."

The area contains the 10,630-hectare Muir-Byenup system which is a wetland of international importance under the Ramsar Convention and contains the largest natural sedgeland in WA as well as being a significant refuge for 35 migratory bird species.

Several reserves also lie within the Lake Muir/Unicup Natural Diversity Recovery Catchment, which DEC manages under the State Salinity Strategy to help recover and protect the wetlands from salinity.

Paul said the planning area contained important visitor facilities including the Perup Nature's Guest House and the Lake Muir Observatory, with the majority of visitor use being low-impact recreation such as day trips for bushwalking, eco-education, bird watching and nature photography.

"Also of great importance are the Aboriginal sites of mythological, ceremonial, cultural and spiritual significance, and non-Indigenous sites associated with early settlement, agriculture and forestry," he said.

"The plan outlines conservation, visitor services and community involvement management strategies for the next 10 years, so it is important that the public has their say. The final plan can then reflect a balance between conservation and recreation, and reflect the interests of the community."

Perup draft management plan 2011 is available from www.dec.wa.gov.au/haveyoursay and from DEC offices at Kensington and Manjimup. Public submissions can be emailed to planning@dec.wa.gov.au, or posted to the Planning Unit, DEC, Locked Bag 104, Bentley Delivery Centre WA 6983.

The public comment period closes on 3 June 2011.

For queries regarding the plan, or for copies of the plan, please contact Paul Roberts on (08) 9771 7942 or email paul.roberts@dec.wa.gov.au.



Environment Minister Bill Marmion at the launch of the Perup draft management plan 2011.



Environment Minister Bill Marmion discussing the finer points of the draft management plan with attendees to the launch.



New Kimberley parks to be jointly managed

A NEW draft management plan that details how six proposed Kimberley conservation parks will be jointly managed by traditional owners and DEC was launched on 25 March 2011.

The *Yoorrooyang Dawang Proposed Conservation Parks draft management plan 2011* covers more than 150,000 hectares of land that will be owned by the Miriuwung and Gajerrong peoples under freehold title and leased back to the state.

Planning Officer Laurina Bullen said planning for joint management of the proposed parks began with the preparation of the Cultural Planning Framework and Joint Planning Guidelines.

"This process was largely driven by the Yoorrooyang Dawang Regional Park Council, which comprises representatives from each of the new conservation parks. Input from other key stakeholders and community members was also considered.

"It acknowledges the Miriuwung and Gajerrong peoples'

responsibility to make decisions about their own traditional country and provides the opportunity for us to learn from one another.

"It was born out of the Indigenous Land Use Agreement—known as the Ord Final Agreement—that acknowledges the Miriuwung Gajerrong peoples' aspiration to manage conservation lands in the Ord River area in the long term."

Chair of the Yoorrooyang Dawang Regional Park Council, Mrs Hapke, said that the process of preparing the plan has been a positive step towards joint management with DEC.

"This is the first time Aboriginal people have worked with the government to manage our country which is really important to us," Mrs Hapke said.

"We are using both traditional and scientific knowledge in the management of our country.

"It makes me really proud that Aboriginal people are using their traditional knowledge to manage the land and to be part of the management team that has helped make this happen is fantastic."

The plan covers the proposed Goomig, Barrbem, Ngamoowalem, Mijing, Jemarnde-wooningim and Darram conservation parks, to be collectively known as the Yoorrooyang Dawang Conservation Parks, in the eastern Kimberley region.

The plan aims to protect the cultural and natural values of the area as well as planning for future recreation and tourism," Laurina said.

"The Miriuwung Gajerrong trainee rangers employed to work on the new parks also play an important role in ensuring that the aspirations of the elders and the Park Council are incorporated into land management actions."

"This includes strategies for accessing country, recording and preserving cultural sites, protecting conservation values, managing fire, establishing recreation facilities, and identifying commercial tourism opportunities."

To view the draft management plan visit www.dec.wa.gov.au/haveyoursay. The public comment period closes at 5pm on 27 May 2011.

Tree Top Walk focus of Chinese delegation

THE Valley of the Giant's Tree Top Walk recently hosted a delegation of high-level Chinese officials who had come to Western Australia to study the state's forest industry.

The visit was coordinated by DEC, Forest Products Commission and the federal government's Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food.

DEC Regional Manager Peter Keppel said the principle objectives of the study tour were to promote the development of forest carbon sequestration in China and improve policy issues related to forestry measures in addressing climate change.

"The visit by the Chinese forestry officials provided opportunities for Australian colleagues to explore the possibilities to discuss forestry expertise," he said.

"The networking relationship will enhance and strengthen the bilateral economic and trade cooperation between the two countries.

"The group was very keen to gain a better understanding of the state's development of forest recreation and tourism

initiatives and the Tree Top Walk is a perfect example of this."

During their visit Peter made a presentation on forestry management in the south-west and a profile on national parks in the region.

Tree Top Walk Guide Helen Nash also led the group around the site outlining the history of the walk, its role as a valuable land management tool as well as an overview of the tingle forest.

"The group was very impressed with the beauty of the rare tingle forest and the experience of the walk itself," Helen said.

Peter said China was an emerging tourism market for the region with a growing Chinese visitor trend occurring at the Tree Top Walk.

"By hosting visiting delegations and media and industry familiarisation trips to the Tree Top Walk, we are creating a greater awareness and appreciation of the many natural wonders we have in the region and this will pay dividends into the future," he said.



The Chinese delegation are welcomed at the Tree Top Walk by Peter Keppel and Helen Nash.



Finding corals: a novel approach to coral identification

DEC MARINE Science Program (MSP) staff recently joined regional DEC staff and a host of invitees to find out that the tricky task of coral sampling and identification can actually be easy and fun.

The coral identification workshop was held at the new Western Australian Conservation Science Centre and organised by MSP staff. It was convened with the aim of increasing the capacity to effectively research and monitor Western Australia's extensive network of coral reefs, from Geographe Bay in the south, to the Cocos Keeling and Christmas group of islands in the far north.

Workshop organiser James Moore, a research scientist with MSP, said the event was important not only for the technical aspects covered but for the opportunity it provided to network with marine scientists from universities, state and federal government agencies and the private sector.

"In a state as large as WA, it's critical that we have the right tools and the right links with the right people to effectively manage and conserve our priceless marine resources," James said.

"This workshop provided all of that and more."

Drawing on the wealth of knowledge of Townsville-based academic Dr Morgan Pratchett and the novel approaches to coral identification developed by science communicator

Russell Kelley with his Coral Finder and Coral Hub, the workshop navigated around overly technical ground, providing practical solutions to the difficulties of establishing research and monitoring programs on coral reefs. A special mention also goes to Dr Jane Fromont who provided samples from the WA Museum's extensive collection of local corals.

"The Coral Finder and Coral Hub use a visual approach to problem-solving and were designed to build a bridge between the challenging need to identify corals underwater, and the wealth of existing scientific knowledge that has been developed in recent decades," Russell said.

"The best thing about a visually driven approach is that anyone with a good eye can teach themselves."

This view was echoed by DEC Broome Marine Park Coordinator Theresa Coutts.

"The course was incredibly useful and has encouraged me to give it a go," Theresa said.

"It has definitely made me want to get out there and start up a monitoring program at the Rowley Shoals."

And for those who can't get enough of their corals, Russell will be doing a repeat command performance as part of the AMSA conference hosted by the WA Museum in Fremantle in July.



DEC MSP staff identifying corals using the Coral Finder (from left to right) James Moore, George Shedrawi, Tom (Wayne) Holmes and Richard Evans. Inset: Russell Kelley testing the Coral Finder on the reef.



Hon Bill Marmion MLA, Minister for Environment; Water (left) and Hon John Day MLA, Member for Kalamunda enjoy morning tea on the Bibbulmun Track.

Upgrade for popular Bibbulmun Track

EARLY morning on Sunday 20 March, DEC Director General Keiran McNamara welcomed guests to morning tea on the Bibbulmun Track in the Perth hills.

Twenty-five representatives from DEC and the Bibbulmun Track Foundation walked into Hewett's Hill camp site, the most northerly of 48 along the track, where Environment Minister Bill Marmion announced funding of \$1.2 million over three years for DEC's Long Trails Maintenance Capital Program.

Most of the funds will be spent on improvements to the Bibbulmun Track and its facilities.

With the current alignment opened in 1998, and the latest survey indicating more than 430,000 visits each year, much of the track infrastructure is scheduled for repair or replacement.

Work along the Bibbulmun Track—which stretches nearly 1,000 kilometres from Perth to Albany—will include erosion control along the trail, while many of the camp sites will receive major upgrades with new toilets, water tanks, gates and signage.

While the assembled guests enjoyed tea and scones, the Minister examined the work already completed at Hewett's Hill.

In his announcement, Mr Marmion congratulated the officers and volunteers of DEC and the Foundation, those present and the many others, on the improvements and on the continued success of the track.

He acknowledged the key contribution of the Department of Corrective Services, whose crews carry out much of the work under DEC supervision, and the consistent support of the member of the legislative assembly for the area, John Day.

Also at the event—and at the opposite end of the technology scale to a Bibbulmun Track camp site—the Minister announced some new ways to discover WA's national parks.

The DEC Campgrounds website recently went live and the first six DEC EveryTrail guides are available to view online and to download to smart phones or GPS devices. Visit the DEC Campgrounds website at www.dec.wa.gov.au/campgrounds and download the EveryTrail guides at www.everytrail.com/partner/dec.



A memorable day with Trevor Walley

THE following email was received by staff at DEC from visitor to Walyunga National Park, George Newland, Lecturer in Human Evolution.

As a lecturer in human evolution at Curtin University, it was my recent privilege to accompany a group of students and staff from Elon University, North Carolina on a trip to Walyunga National Park.

These particular students were on an anthropology tour, focused on Indigenous studies, and, on recommendation of a friend, I invited EcoEducation Aboriginal Officer Trevor Walley to meet us at Walyunga National park to talk about Nyoongar life.

I was not disappointed, and neither was the visiting party. Trevor held us spellbound for the next two hours with his descriptions of life in times past, through his deep knowledge of Nyoongar culture.

The program Trevor presented was varied and balanced, with demonstrations that kept our interest high. Descriptions of daily life were brought to life by examples of artefacts, such as the buka or cloak of kangaroo skin and firestick, which was the constant companion in nomadic life.

A hands-on session where students were encouraged to make their own stone knife or tarp by gluing flakes of quartz onto sticks with grasstree cement was a great hit.

We then went 'walkabout' through the park to a factory site where stone tools had been made for at least 8,000 years according to archaeological evidence.

As we walked, Trevor's digressions showed a deep knowledge of the local flora and fauna, right down to scientific names. He pointed out that scratches on a red gum tree had been made by a possum, and little depressions in the sand were bee-eater nests.

We looked at examples of 'bush tucker' such as the yam and cycad seed, and thrill of thrills for the Americans—we came across several kangaroos. I meant to ask Trevor how he had arranged that little surprise!

All in all it was a fascinating and rewarding experience and the Elon staff members have requested it be added to the itinerary for their trip next year.

I would rate Trevor an outstanding educator, and, my 30 years of experience has led me to the conclusion that such people are born, not made.

DEC is fortunate indeed to have Trevor's services.



Trevor talks about the cultural significance of the fire stick and cloak kangaroo skin with the visitors from Elon University.

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, WA 6009.

Managing Editor: Madeleine Clews

Editor: Sarah Deverell

Contributing Editors: Joanna Moore and Kahla Emonson

Design and Production: Peter Nicholas

Telephone: (08) 9389 8644

Email: ecn@dec.wa.gov.au

Funding awarded for waste projects

THE successful grant recipients from the second round of the Waste Authority's two grant programs were recently announced by Environment Minister Bill Marmion.

Four organisations have been awarded Strategic Waste Initiatives Scheme (SWIS) funding to support a range of waste management projects, from glass crushing plants to training in biodegradable waste recovery.

Six organisations have been awarded Community Grants Scheme (CGS) funding to support a range of enabling projects, from worm farms to education in waste management.

Since 2004, the Waste Authority has funded a wide range of projects that aim

to reduce the amount of waste entering the waste stream.

The funding stream is split into two. Community organisations can apply for funding of up to \$20,000 in CGS, and there is an open limit for SWIS which is targeted at major projects.

The organisations set to receive SWIS funding include the City of Rockingham, Fulton Hogan Industries, Perth Market Authority and the Shire of Derby/West Kimberley.

Mr Marmion said it was essential to increase the amount of material being recycled and reused, and improve the way we manage waste.

"It is pleasing to see these funds raised from the landfill levy going to support

significant projects which have such worthy environmental outcomes and assist in waste reduction," he said.

Round two CGS funding was awarded to the Centre for Appropriate Technology, East Fremantle Farm Inc, Lions Club of Lancelin and Districts Inc, Lockridge Community Garden, Murdoch Uni Sustainability Team (MUST) and Rainbow Coast Neighbourhood Centre Inc.

The grants scheme provides support to community organisations engaged in small-scale projects consistent with the State Waste Strategy and emerging priorities. The grants are allocated by the Waste Authority and administered by DEC.

For more information on the SWIS and CGS visit www.zerowastewa.com.au.

