



DEC volunteers honoured at award ceremony



Parks and Visitor Services Director Peter Sharp presents a Volunteer of the Year award to Louise Hopper of the Kaarakin Black Cockatoo Rehabilitation Centre.

FRIDAY 2 December 2011 saw the annual DEC Volunteer of the Year awards ceremony held at the WA Conservation Science Centre in Kensington.

Nominations for awards were invited from DEC volunteer group peers and coordinators across WA and from the 3,602 volunteers active in the past year, 57 were nominated either individually or as part of a group.

After much deliberation, the judging panel decided that three individuals and one group deserved Volunteer of the Year awards, with five individuals and five groups awarded Outstanding Service awards.

Winners came from a wide range of programs including wildlife rehabilitation, the WA Herbarium, campground hosting, Munda Biddi Trail and Bibbulmun Track maintenance teams and various community groups.

The event was well-attended, with 140 volunteers and staff present. Deputy Director General Parks and Conservation Jim Sharp hosted the awards ceremony, while Parks and Visitor Services Director Peter Sharp presented the awards to winning volunteers.

Jim and Peter praised the efforts of the volunteers and admired their efforts in vital roles across many programs run by DEC.

"The level of commitment is impressive,

and in some cases it has continued for over 20 years. Each person involved in volunteering at DEC is providing an outstanding service to nature conservation in WA—many projects would simply not be possible without volunteers," Jim said.

After the award ceremony, DEC's

Community Involvement Unit (CIU)—which coordinates the department's volunteer program—hosted a morning tea for all winners, nominees and their supporters.

In addition, the *Community Involvement annual report 2010–11* was launched at the event. **continued on page 2 ...**



Peter Sharp (centre) with the WA Herbarium specimen mounting team (left to right): Kate Creed, Val Preston, Ruby Johnson, Patricia Gurry, Fran Kininmonth and Jean Lovelock. More photos from the event are available to view at www.flickr.com/photos/67334482@N04/sets/72157628286721027/



... continued from page 1.

The report provides information on volunteer work across DEC and partnership programs in the last financial year. Copies of the report are available from CIU by emailing community.involvement@dec.wa.gov.au or calling (08) 9334 0582.

Winners at the Volunteer of the Year awards include:

2011 DEC Volunteer of the Year awards

- Cedric Bakewell of Hillman – Regional Parks – Rockingham Lakes/Men of the Trees
- Louise Hopper of Thornlie – Kaarakin Black Cockatoo Rehabilitation Centre
- Pat Thompson of South Perth – Wildcare helpline and DEC library
- WA Herbarium specimen mounting team – Kate Creed (Applecross), Patricia Gurry (Floreat), Jill Hughes (Wembley Downs), Ruby Johnson (Wembley), Fran Kininmonth (Guildford), Jean Lovelock (Bassendean), Heather Mahon (Mt Lawley), Val Preston (Rivervale) and Lyn Roberts (Subiaco)

2011 DEC Outstanding Service awards

- Terry Edmett of Roleystone – Perth Observatory
- Tony Weldon of Nedlands – Mitsubishi 4WD Club
- Jenny Payet of Wellington Mills – Wellington Mills Community Association
- Jesse Steele of Riverside Gardens – wildlife rehabilitation
- Chris Byrnes of Karratha – Keep Australia Beautiful Adopt-a-Spot
- Crooked Brook Forest Member team – Ross Jarvis (Leschenault), Tom Cross (Dardanup) and Lynton Gillies (Dardanup)
- Tony Fitzgerald (South Perth) and Peter Kitto (Greenfields) aka the Grumpy Old Men – Munda Biddi Trail
- Keith and Rhonda Skelley of Cervantes – campground hosts
- Jeff and Linda Falconer of Wonnerup – wildlife rehabilitation
- Bibbulmun Track maintenance team – Steve Sertis (Palmyra), Jan and Colin Read (Kelmscott), John Chelley (Mt Claremont) and Jim Freeman (Mandurah)

Check your load for cane toads

AS the holiday season approaches, DEC is reminding people travelling to the Kimberley or the eastern states to check their loads for uninvited passengers.

State Cane Toad Initiative Program Leader Corrin Everitt said cane toads will be on the move during the wet season in the state's north.

"Toads like hiding in items such as swags, fishing gear, caravans, boats and camper trailers," she said.

"People who are travelling to cane toad areas in the east Kimberley, as well as to Queensland and the Northern Territory, are reminded to check their gear before leaving to ensure they do not have any unwanted travelers.

"At present, cane toads are in the Ord River on the boundary of Purnululu National Park. They have continued to move across the Parry Lagoon Nature Reserve and are expected to be in Wyndham in numbers by the end of the wet season.

"They are breeding in the Ord River irrigation area around Kununurra, and will continue to move west."

In the lead-up to the wet season, DEC continued to roll out the *Cane Toad Strategy for Western Australia 2009-19*. This included assessing the risk of cane toads invading offshore islands, reviewing quarantine procedures and evaluating current research into possible control methods for cane toads.

Throughout the wet season (generally between December and April), DEC will focus on working with farmers, transport companies and tourists to provide information on the identification of cane toads and strategies to reduce the risk of

hitchhiker toads reaching new areas.

DEC will also be conducting surveillance activities in Purnululu National Park in order to identify where toads are within the park and prioritise areas for management once the park is accessible.

The department will also continue to implement strategies such as erecting signage at boat ramps between Kununurra and Derby and will continue to collaborate with the Department of Agriculture and Food WA to identify high-risk freight and produce leaving Kununurra.

For more information or to report cane toad sightings call (toll free) 1800 084 881 or visit www.dec.wa.gov.au/canetoads.



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, Kahla Emonson and Karla Forrest

Design and Production:
Peter Nicholas

Telephone: (08) 9389 8644

Email: ecn@dec.wa.gov.au



Bibbulmun Track improvement reaches new heights

THE Bibbulmun Track has benefited from a massive undertaking that saw 2.5 tonnes of construction material air-lifted into remote sections of the track to upgrade the popular walking trail.

In a joint operation between DEC's Recreation and Trails Unit (RTU), Fire Management Services (FMS) and the Frankland District, a helicopter was used to lift a four-metre-long, pre-assembled bridge, as well as timber for steps and drainage works, to parts of the trail needing work.

Upgrades were deemed necessary by DEC and the Bibbulmun Track Foundation after years of high use meant the track had begun to show signs of deterioration. The RTU—custodian of the iconic track—investigated the level of damage through an end-to-end reconnaissance walk by Construction Supervisor Scott Hunter, who identified a range of significant issues that required attention.

Project Manager Dave Lathwell said a number of sites requiring upgrade were identified in the Long Point,

Quarram and Conspicuous Cliff areas.

"The remoteness, inaccessibility and amount of materials required for repairs caused us to look at all options to get the materials on site," he said.

"After extensive investigation it was determined a 'heli lift' would be the most efficient."

Dave became aware of a plan to replace the Mt Frankland fire tower cabin and that FMS were going to do this with a heli lift.

"As this was intended to be conducted at about the same time as we needed to move the track construction materials, there would be some savings to both operations

if they were carried out jointly."

Dave said the successful completion of the sling line heli lift operation was due to the efforts and coordination on the day by the RTU's Scott Hunter, FMS's Brad Bourke and Frankland District's Wayne Burton and crew.

Funding for the heli lift and refurbishment works came as part of a three-year Long Trails Improvement program, which is now in its final year.

"The program has achieved significant improvements including major refurbishment of 25 campsites and works on another 18, construction of 10 bridges and many kilometres of track improvement," Dave said.



Graham White and pilot Dave Newman prepare the bridge to be air-lifted.

Total fire ban changes to better cater for the needs of farmers

RECENT legislative changes allow farmers more flexibility during total fire bans (TFB) to continue the work that contributes to their livelihood.

Agricultural activities such as harvesting, moving livestock and servicing farm machinery can now continue on total fire ban days, unless the local government office has declared a ban that stops these activities.

Certain activities such as grinding, welding or operating an oxytorch are still not permitted during a total fire ban.

Fire and Emergency Services Authority Acting Chief Operations Officer Lloyd Bailey said the changes were a good outcome to cater for the needs of farmers without increasing the bushfire risk.

"The changes will allow farmers to continue day to day farming activities in their local area under a total fire ban until their shire deems it unsafe to continue based on local conditions," Mr Bailey said.

The changes also remove the requirement for farmers to have a fire-fighting vehicle onsite while

using machinery powered by an internal combustion engine, although local government laws may require a fire-fighting vehicle to be onsite during harvesting.

The changes were made after a consultation process with local governments and farmer representative bodies.

FESA have launched a total fire ban information line – 1800 709 355 – to promote the changes and provide up to date information on total fire bans.

Mr Bailey said the declaring of total fire bans was an important prevention measure and urged everyone to be aware of what they can and can't do when one is declared.

"While these changes apply to the agricultural community, total fire bans are something every West Australian needs to be aware of in order to reduce the risk of fires this summer," he said.

For more information about total fire bans visit www.fesa.wa.gov.au. For more information on harvest and vehicle movement bans contact your local government office.



*Merry Christmas
from the ECN
team*

The ECN team would like to remind readers that this is the last issue of Environment and Conservation News for 2011.

The next issue will come out on 17 January 2012.

The ECN team would like to thank all of our readers for your support and contributions during 2011. We look forward to bringing you the news from around the department in 2012.

