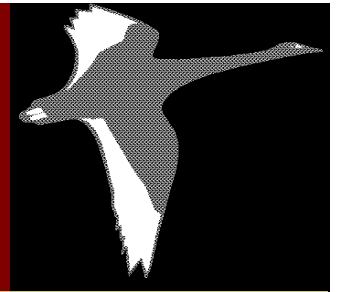


Swan Region Newsletter

May 2009



Fire Coordinator's Dedication Recognised

Kevin Pollock, Fire Coordinator for the Perth Hills District has been awarded an Australian Fire Service Medal for his "distinguished service, professionalism and dedication".

Kevin received the Australian Government Honours List medal from His Excellency Dr Kenneth Michael, Governor of Western Australia, at a presentation at Government House in Perth on 11 September 2009. He was among 52 recipients from various walks of life across Western Australia and one of only two Australian Fire Service medal winners from WA.

Kevin's vast range of fire experience spans over 42 years with DEC. He is only the third DEC employee to be awarded the medal in the department's history.

Kevin agreed that it was a great honour to receive the award but said he did not believe he was solely responsible for the accomplishment.

"The award should also be seen as an achievement by my colleagues and their

commitment to get a job done," he said.

"I love my work and am completely satisfied with all that it offers.

"The complexity of working in the Perth Hills, with its urban interface, to carry out prescribed burning creates a challenge that ensures complete job satisfaction".



Back row, centre, Kevin Pollock with other medal winners.

World Parks Day Celebrations

Sunday 19 September 2009 marked the second annual celebrations of National World Parks Day. The theme of this year's celebrations was 'Parks for life', which aims to promote the role that parks can play in our physical and mental wellbeing. National Parks throughout DEC's Swan Region celebrated by providing free entry on the day.

The Perth Hills National Parks Centre hosted a 'mini festival' with displays from *Nearer to Nature*, the Bibbulmun Track Foundation and the Mundabiddi Foundation. *Nearer to Nature* also provided visitors with a free hands-on animal encounter.

Yanchep NP provided free guided walks and

koala viewing sessions.

The Department provided a National Park Pass to each participating venue as part of a prize draw. The lucky winners will now be enjoying our parks for free all year round!



Visitors enjoying our national and regional parks.

Young Tourism Ambassador for Yanchep NP

Following a joint nomination by Tourism WA and Future Now, congratulations go to James Spurgeon, a first year guide at Yanchep National Park, who has been named the new Young Tourism Ambassador in recognition of his commitment to training and the tourism industry.

James' nomination was proudly supported by Tourism WA's Aboriginal Employment and James will now feature on the Department of Education and Training's [Apprenticentre website](#) as the new Young Tourism Ambassador.



James receiving his award from the Minister for Training, the Hon Peter Collier MLC

James is a first year tour guide trainee at Yanchep National Park and said that "one year after leaving school he did not know

what he wanted to do with his future". After watching the success of his sister, who had previously completed a traineeship in tourism, James applied to become a trainee tour guide at the Park.

"I get to work out in the open with animals and I get to experience interesting things that not many people have the opportunity to experience on a day-to-day basis," James said.

Acting Manager of Yanchep National Park, Alison Pritchard received a certificate (on behalf of DEC) of appreciation, presented by the Minister for Training, the Hon Peter Collier MLC.



James in Crystal Cave at Yanchep NP

Peel Trails Group Commends Regional Officer

In a letter of commendation to DEC's Deputy Director General PVS, Jim Sharp, the Chairman of the Peel Trails Group has expressed appreciation for the hard work of Elisa Skillen.

Elisa is an Operations Officer with Parks and Visitor Services based in the Perth Hills District of Swan Region.

The letter recognises the input and hard work that Elisa has provided in drafting the

Trails Master Plan for the Region as well as the more recent individual local government Master Plans. This work has taken place over the past two years.

Elisa's non-confrontational manner, "can do" attitude and the management of her workload were highly commended as were her commitment and knowledge.

Congratulations Elisa.

Trail Bike Management—DEC's Response

AS many of you are aware, Western Australia is experiencing rapid growth in the popularity of Off-Road Vehicle (ORV) use. It is estimated that around 50,000 trail bikes are ridden in WA and four wheel driving is also a growing and popular recreational activity.

The lack of designated areas, and the confusion around where ORV activity can and cannot occur, has contributed to a proliferation of unofficial, and often illegal, riding and driving areas. These are causing increasing community concern over environmental damage, noise, safety, illegal riding and general nuisance.

What is happening at a State level?

The cross agency (DEC, DSR, DPI, WAPC, DLGRD) State Trail Bike Strategy has been completed highlighting the issues/strategies and project plan to address the concerns of the community, land owners and the riders. The Strategy has now been costed with the Department of Treasury and a joint agency implementation committee (JAIC) is currently progressing the recommendations.

What about locally?

DEC, along with the City of Swan and the City of Wanneroo, recently developed the Gnangara and Pinjar ORV Management Plan which highlights the issues and strategies for the land owners, councils, general community and riders.

DEC has also commissioned Trail Bike Management Australia to develop a cross agency Land Use Planning Study for Off Road

Vehicles. It is hoped that this study will ultimately provide clarity regarding where ORV activity could be permitted, appropriate facilities developed, and where it is not permitted. The project aligns with the *Trails Planning* recommendations of the State Trail Bike Strategy.



Trail bike riders in the Swan Coastal District

A project web site has been developed, www.tbma.com.au/orvlp with background information and a map of the study area which shows current constraints of disease risk area and water catchment boundaries. For any further details on the above projects please contact Kathleen Lowry, Regional Leader PVS Swan Region.

Written by Kathleen Lowry

Peek-a-boo, where are you?

Contacting DEC staff members does not need to be difficult, but sometimes locating a person is more time consuming than it should be. If you are tired of using the out-of-date hard copy telephone book that the Department puts out each year, there is a solution!

The on-line Phone Manager is the best way to ensure that your contact information is up-to-date and easily accessible.

Phone Manager allows you to include information about yourself that is not available in the hard copy directory, such as your mobile number, a photo, information about your

position, responsibilities and location. You can even select 'key words' to include so you can be easily located by others in the Department (i.e if you include the key word 'dieback' then anyone looking for someone who knows about die back can locate you quickly and easily).

One of the best things about Phone Manager is that you are in control and can update it as often as you like. Phone Manager is rapidly becoming the preferred method of finding DEC staff, so update your now by visiting <http://decwise/>.

Getting ready for the Wildfire Season

To some, the cool weather has meant that the prospect of wildfire seems way off, but for our Preformed Teams (PFTs), the reality is that the 2009 season is just around the corner !

Fire Fitness medicals and assessments head the list of preparations with the Swan Region hosting the first round of fire fitness assessments on September 23 and 24. A final round of assessments will be held at the Kwinana office on 10 November, and at the Swan Region Office in Bentley on 11 November. Swan Coastal and Perth Hills Districts will also complete testing during the lead up to the season (dates to be announced).

With the growing interest in PFTs, the Swan Region now has members across all five teams. Historically the Swan Region staff were predominantly placed in Green and Gold teams, however, there is now a mix of members from the Midwest, Wheatbelt Southwest and the Swan Region in all teams.



Tegan Laslett, Laurina Bullen, Melissa Mazzella and Michelle Anderson after the 1.6km 'walk test'

In November the wildfire pre-season briefings will begin for the PFTs with a joint briefing for the Blue and Red teams being held on 12 November. Green and Gold teams will meet on the 13 November, and the Black team will likely meet in early December.

The Perth Hills will hold their wildfire pre-season briefing on 28 and 29 September and the Swan Coastal District is yet to be announced.

These briefings are important for information sharing and to ensure you receive the latest updates, learn lessons from the previous



Peter Burton, Keith Low & Paul Brennan set a cracking pace for the 3.22km 'pack test'

season and have an understanding of the Department's policies regarding fire etc.

For more information on fitness testing in your location or on pre-season briefings, please contact the relevant District or office.

Written by Jane Mansergh

Australasian Fire and Emergency Authorities Council Study Tour (AFEAC, formerly known as AFAC)

On 15 September Kevin Pollock and Rob Towers hosted the AFEAC Study Tour which this year focused on wildfire issues on the urban interface and prescribed burning methodologies.

The 10 person tour group consisted of mid to upper-level managers with fire responsibilities from land management and metropolitan fire brigades from around Australia. Feedback from the tour leader at the end of the day indicated, once again, that DEC faces similar issues to the other States regarding wildfire impacting on the interface and that we have an enviable reputation in tackling the prescribed burning required to mitigate the risks of fires to the community in this setting.

This information sharing and tour guide/inspection has become a part of regular business for both Rob and Kevin who normally host fire agency managers, parliamentary committees, academics or similar visitors on such trips three or four times each year.

Written by Rob Towers

Weddings, Parties, Anything!

Bruce Harvey officially retired on August 20 after 38 years' service with the Department. During August Bruce also became a Grandfather for the first time. Baby Samuel James Harvey is happy and healthy and is having a delightful impact on life for the whole Harvey family.



Bruce Harvey (centre), recounting a few of the highlights of his 38 years service.

Bruce will be missed and remembered fondly by the Department and he is very much looking forward to his first summer with no fire commitments for 30 years.

Murray Love has returned from a two year secondment to Main Roads Department where he worked on the Southern Gateway — Perth to Bunbury Highway (a welcome addition for those of us who travel between Perth and Bunbury). Murray thoroughly enjoyed working on the project and now returns to the Senior Operations Officer Nature Conservation role, which has been expanded to include Parks and Visitor Services for the Peel Region.

Scott McFarlane joined DEC as the Team Leader (Kwinana) Environmental Regulation on 21 September 2009.

Scott is originally from Glasgow, Scotland, but has moved here from Bristol, England. He has spent most of his career so far working in various roles for the Environment Agency, the regulatory authority that protects and enhances



Scott McFarlane (hard at work!)

the environment for more than 50 million people in England and Wales.

For the last 12 years, he has worked in industry regulation, in a variety of roles and a wide range of different sectors. He was an inspector for six years before becoming team leader and finally taking up the position of manager. Most recently he has worked as a policy advisor for the fuel and power sectors, covering mainly coal-fired power stations.

Scott and his wife, Val, are keen to settle in Australia permanently, are looking forward to getting out and seeing some of the great landscapes and wildlife in WA and maybe taking some surfing lessons.

Stefan De Haan (Perth Hills District Manager) and wife Peta welcomed baby Henry on 17 August. Henry arrived 4 weeks early and weighted 6 pound 2 ounces.



Baby Henry De Haan

Jessica McShane welcomes her 'fur-baby', Eddie. Yes, Eddie is an adorable 8 week old Staffordshire Bull Terrier.



Eddie the Staffordshire Bull Terrier