


Community Involvement Unit newsletter



Department of
Environment and Conservation

Our environment, our future 

August 2012

Spring 2012 Edition !

I'm in danger of being boring but having just confirmed the figures for volunteer activity in DEC for 2011/12 another huge **THANK YOU** to all concerned is due. In summary – we exceeded all expectations with 51 **new** projects recorded, over 14,000 registered volunteers with 4,000 individuals contributing more than 457,557 hours last year alone. An amazing effort - **THANK YOU and WELL DONE.**

All our active volunteers and projects are now recorded on our "Volgistics" system which will make communication even easier.

Annual rewards for last year will be in the post over the next few weeks and thereafter we will generate rewards quarterly. See page 3 for the revised rewards system.

The main bit!! As volunteers and staff in DEC we are by nature usually dedicated, committed, sensitive and modest individuals who might seek peace and solitude – rather than the SPOTLIGHT!!

In short I am encouraging all our volunteers and projects to be **"bloody, bold, and resolute"** (apologies to Shakespeare!) and let your local community

and other stakeholders know of your successes, amazing work, and the social capital which you are generating on a continuous basis.

In the CIU we do as much as we can to advocate volunteering activity – and sometimes we need your help. Nominations open soon for DEC "Volunteers of the Year" and individuals who deserve an "Outstanding Service Award".

Start thinking of those stars in your midst, and look out for information on how to put them forward in the next few months.

Earlier this year, we nominated previous DEC Volunteer of the Year winners Louise Hopper, Jim Freeman, and Christine Hollister for the Volunteering WA Volunteer of the Year awards.

The awards night in May was a major event supported by the Governor of WA Malcolm McCusker and the Minister for Volunteering Hon Robyn McSweeney MLA. Individual Volunteer of the Year winner was Graham Mabury, in recognition of a lifetime of community service.

In summary – we will continue to promote your volunteer work individually and collectively wherever possible.

If you can also provide stories and pictures to local media it helps promotion of your work. Let us know what you're up to too and we will try and get DEC media to circulate your good news even wider!!

That's it – enjoy the spring weather – thanks again- look after each other and keep talking and sharing ideas and the workload.

Hugh Maclean

Coordinator,

Community Involvement Unit



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Also:

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- Campground Host vacancies
- Volunteer opportunities



Monday September 17 sees the fifth annual World Parks Day, celebrating parks and green spaces

Visit www.worldparksday.com for information on events in your area



Campground hosts introduced to Yalgorup National Park

Yalgorup National Park lies on the western edge of the Swan Coastal Plain just south of Mandurah.

Situated 80 minutes drive south of Perth and 45 minutes south of Mandurah, the Park offers panoramic views of beaches, peaceful settings of Tuart forest and woodlands and sweeping views over tranquil lakes.

The name Yalgorup is derived from two Nyoongar Aboriginal words; Yalgor, meaning 'a swamp' or 'lake', and up, a suffix meaning 'a place'. This is appropriate as Yalgorup occupies a narrow coastal strip of land which protects 10 lakes, all listed under the international Ramsar Convention, and harbours a large variety of bird life and amazing thrombolite living fossils.

The park's one and only campground at Martins Tank was renovated in April. The new redevelopment sees the site upgraded to include access for small caravans and camper trailers, a camper's kitchen, toilet block and a designated campground host site.

The park has only recently introduced campground hosts and the program has proved to be a huge success. Park ranger Ben Byrne says "The program has been amazing. We've had a continuous run of campground hosts since December last year.

Having hosts on-site has not only helped curb anti-social behavior, it has increased revenue and added a new dimension to the park.

Visitors now have a wealth of knowledge and experience at their fingertips during their stay.



Campground Hosts Lyn and Graham Horrex with ranger Ben Byrne (photo: © DEC)

Not only can visitors receive information about Yalgorup, they can also get all the hints and tips of other places the hosts have visited."

If you are interested in hosting at Yalgorup National Park contact

Ben Byrne on **0419 973 414** or email: ben.byrne@dec.wa.gov.au



Martins Tank at Yalgorup. Photo: © DEC

Campground host vacancies



Stokes National Park. Photo © DEC

Volunteer Campground hosts are needed for Stokes Inlet, Esperance District for the following months:

Oct 2012 to Jan 2013 and **March 2013 to July 2013**

Dave Thornburg, Senior ranger at Stokes National Park

92 Dempster Street,
Esperance WA 6450

08 9076 8541 (work)

0437 114 348 (mobile) or email:

dave.thornburg@dec.wa.gov.au

Ideally looking for people to do one month stints between the above dates, but they are flexible so if you are interested contact:

Volgistics update and revised volunteer rewards

As you may remember from previous newsletters, the Community Involvement Unit has now moved to a new database, Volgistics, to assist in the management of our registered volunteers.

Currently we have over 7000 active volunteers across the whole state of Western Australia. This means that



you are part of an amazing and wide-spread team of devoted people that volunteer hundreds of thousands of hours each year protecting and conserving our native flora and fauna.

You may have noticed that you have received more messages from us lately (hopefully of interest!) including this newsletter. If you are reading this for the first time it is because you are now registered on the new database. This new system should all add up to better communications between DEC and the volunteers, and improved management of projects.

Our new database allows us to present rewards in a more timely way i.e. when you reach certain milestones in volunteered hours, as opposed to at the end of the financial year as was previously the case.

However, we can only do this if we receive timesheets so we now require you to send them in to us every quarter— by 1 October, 1 January, 1 April and 1 July annually—either by email to:

community.involvement@dec.wa.gov.au

or to the postal address found on the back page of the newsletter.

Timesheets have also been updated to hopefully make the process of recording and returning hours simpler. An example is included at the end of the newsletter, please photocopy and use it as necessary.

Electronic versions can also be forwarded on request.

These timesheets need to be forwarded to your **project coordinator** for them to sign off and return to us each quarter.

**For 2012 –13,
please return
timesheets
each quarter -
by October 1,
January 1,
April 1 and
July 1**

DEC volunteer rewards 2012 – 13

As a thank you for the valuable work that they offer, all DEC volunteers are included within the Volunteer Hours Reward Program, which rewards them for their contribution to the work of DEC for the previous financial year.

We realise that most volunteers don't expect anything for their work; they do it for the love of the cause, but we like to show our appreciation and thanks in the form of small rewards.

The previous system has been reviewed, after it was seen that there was a large jump between the first and last stages.

This has now been addressed. Effective **from 1 July 2012**, the rewards system is shown in the table below:

Volunteer completing:	Reward:	Date issued:
20 Hours	Thank you letter from Director General, Plus 20 % discount voucher at DEC outlets	Quarterly
50 hours	DEC Volunteer park pass	1 August annually (end of financial year)
150 hours	Limited edition WA native species lapel badge	Quarterly
300 hours	DEC Voucher - \$30	Quarterly
500+ hours	Landscape Subscription and Volunteer Pass	1 August annually

Please note: Other DEC sections / programs may provide additional rewards as appropriate to their own project, budget and approvals.

Unless otherwise indicated, rewards and correspondence will be issued four times each year in July, October, January, and April based on the cumulative total of hours provided for that year/quarter to date.

Each reward is issued **once** only in any financial year

If you have any questions regarding any of the above please contact the Community Involvement Unit

Bibbulmun Track storm damage



The recent storms wreaked havoc across much of the southwest and the Bibbulmun Track was badly affected in most areas.

Along with DEC staff, Bibbulmun Track Foundation maintenance volunteers have been busy clearing debris from their sections.

Their reports to DEC of problems requiring assistance make the clean-up easier for the DEC crews as they can go directly to those worst-hit areas.



Fallen trees at Harris Dam on the Bibbulmun Track © Bibbulmun Track

The team looking after the section Caversham Road to Harris Dam picnic area comprises three generations – granddad Alan Barker, his daughter Mandy Szeliga and granddaughter Amy.

We received this message from Mandy:

Due to the storms last week I thought it a good idea to go and check for damage on my section.

It took Dad, Amy and myself some time to clear this section as best we could not leaving us enough time to do the section from the shelter to Caversham Road which I will get on to as soon as I can.

As you can imagine it was a mess with fallen branches everywhere as well as whole trees, including a couple of fallen trees on the Harris River Road which we could see from where the Track crossed.

Some areas where the worst damage occurred required a bit more muscle than we were able to muster so we called on the help of other volunteers.



Mandy and Amy clearing storm damaged trees from their section of the Track

© Bibbulmun Track

The Foundation really appreciates the hard work put in to maintain the Track by Mandy and her team as well as all our other enthusiastic and dedicated volunteers.

**For information on
volunteering on the
Bibbulmun Track contact:
Gwen on 9481 0551 or
email:
[friends@bibbulmuntrack.
org.au](mailto:friends@bibbulmuntrack.org.au)**

Woylie project update

Volunteers have collectively contributed over 2,500 hours in the past year by assisting Manjimup DEC Science Division's award winning team in the mammoth effort to save the woylie from extinction. They have:

- Bushwhacked their way through dense undergrowth to retrieve and record whatever landed in the 450 pitfall traps
- Readjusted their body clock to begin pre-dawn woylie monitoring
- Brushed up detective skills identifying sandpad prints or camera images
- Rugged up to perch atop the vehicle spotlighting
- Put on their brightest smile to feature in the woylie video

The 41 founding members of Perup sanctuary's woylie insurance population have been avid little breeders! Five teams were kept busy emptying traps, assisting in assessments and recording data of the 111 individual woylies trapped.

If that wasn't enough, two traps yielded rare finds: twin young in one woylie's pouch and a numbat carrying two young!

Unfortunately, the capture rate of woylies in the open forest has continued to decline to record lows. Predator surveying using sensor cameras and sandpads has indicated an increased fox and cat presence.



Fortunately our volunteers (above and below left) did come face-to-face with wildlife such as brushtail possums, chuditch, quenda and a bob-tail even though the woylies were scarce.

Volunteers who inspected the 450 pitfall traps in each of six trapping sessions in the past year have helped build upon existing knowledge of regional small vertebrates by capturing two humming frogs (*Neobatrachus pelobatooides*) not previously known to exist so far from the Stirling Ranges.

In another coup, Kevin, a visiting Colby College undergraduate who assisted in the predator data analysis, was the first to spot a ringtail possum – the first in almost seven years in the Perup area.

A joint Department of Environment and Conservation, Warren Catchments Council *Caring for Our Country* Project.



Department of Environment and Conservation



CARING FOR OUR COUNTRY



Some volunteers come along with special talents or a willingness to be exploited!

Sophia (above, right) fits both categories. Initially recruited February 2011 for woylie trapping, Sophia stayed for a second week during which time she took a stack of video footage which has since been edited into a YouTube woylie special.

How can you be involved?

Contact:

Kathy Dawson
(Volunteer Coordinator)
Warren Catchments Council
52 Bath St
Manjimup WA 6258
Ph 9771 8180
kathy.dawson@water.wa.gov.au

Helpline volunteers visit Perth Observatory

One fine, chilly evening in mid-May, about 20 of DEC's Wildcare Helpline volunteers visited Perth Observatory at Bickley in the Perth hills to meet with other volunteers and share stories about their work.

The group was led by Arthur Harvey, the chairman of Perth Observatory Volunteer Group, up to the hilltop where Observatory volunteers Mary, Terry and Geoff were operating the telescopes.

The visitors had the opportunity to experience what is available for members of the public to book at the Observatory's viewing nights over summer— looking through telescopes to see objects that are as close as the moon or as far away as a nebula about 165,000 light years away.

They also got a run down on what was visible in the night sky and learnt a bit about the constellations that they were seeing.

The observing session highlighted the ringed planet



Saturn, followed by views of the star clusters Omega Centauri and the Jewel Box.

Then came the nebulae known as Eta Carinae Nebula and the Tarantula Nebula. Such nebulae (*from Latin for 'cloud'*) are places where new stars are forming within vast clouds of gas and dust.

Just when everybody was starting to feel pretty cold, Sonia and Helen from the CIU called everyone back to the Observatory's admin building where they'd laid out a fine supper.

Good food, warm drinks and good company rounded off a successful evening, with the precedent set for more of these *volunteer encounters*.

Information about the Perth Observatory's night tours for 2012-13 are available from their website:

www.perthobservatory.wa.gov.au/



Left: Perth Observatory staff and Wildcare Helpline volunteers at the Bickley Observatory

Perth Observatory seeks new volunteers

Perth Observatory relies greatly on its faithful band of star viewing guides to run the popular viewing nights, which start in the October school holidays and run until the following April each year.

The star viewing program began in 1988 and steadily expanded, with volunteers helping since 1996.

Their contribution has increased in recent years and most of the star viewing nights now are conducted by the Perth Observatory Volunteer Group (POVG).

On a viewing night, guides stand by

each of the four dedicated public viewing telescopes and tell visitors about the chosen targets while the visitors take it in turns to gaze through the telescopes.

No previous experience in astronomy is required, though it can be an advantage.

The most important attributes are willingness to learn, and the ability to be comfortable as the leader or guide of small groups of ten or so visitors. Most POVG

vollies learn on the job, with a lot of help from the more experienced members.

For more information on the role of Observatory volunteers and to apply to be a volunteer please visit the Observatory's website:

www.perthobservatory.wa.gov.au

Training dates 2012



Basic Course in Wildlife Rehabilitation in May © DEC

There are only two remaining dates for the DEC Basic Course in Wildlife Rehabilitation in 2012.

They are :

Metro weekend course:

September 8, 9

Regional course:

August 18, 19 at Katanning

There is also only **one** remaining **Advanced Topic** course remaining:

Saturday **September 22**—Managing oiled, soiled & sticky wildlife, with Perth Zoo veterinarian Dr Rebecca Vaughan.

The cost for advanced topic talks is \$25 and registration forms are available on the DEC website.

Places for all courses are filling up fast so please act quickly if you would like to attend.

For more information on any of the courses or to book your place, please call Lorene on 9334 0251 or email: community.involvement@dec.wa.gov.au

Care and rehabilitation of birds

Maroo wildlife refuge centre will be holding two training courses in the next few months. Firstly, a **Bird Care and Rehabilitation** course at their new education centre, on Sunday 16th September from 9am to 3pm.

The training day is open to anybody who has an interest in looking after WA's native fauna.

Maroo is also proud to present Dave McGrath, a sustainability Manager and educator from the U.K. who will be presenting a talk on bird behaviour on the day.

The second is **Fluid Treatment: Art of Injecting and Medicating**, to be held on Sunday 14th October again from 9am to 3pm.

This course is intended for those who are rehabilitating animals on a continuing basis. It is designed to increase your knowledge and assist in the learning of a new and important skill.

The trainer will be Jo Burston R.V.N. who is an experienced Wildlife Nurse and a DEC Registered Wildlife Rehabilitator.

For more details and to secure your seat please ring Jo on 0409 086 973 or email:

dollar.downs@bigpond.com



Maroo request a donation of \$25 for each course, with all money raised going straight back into Maroo's wildlife care and rehabilitation.



Above: pictures from Maroo's successful Bandaging, crop Feeding and Tubing course held in May © Maroo Wildlife Refuge Inc

How are you going to Walk Over October?

Following ten successful years of Walk Week, 2011 saw the replacement of this event with the launch of **Walk Over October**. Throughout the month there will be walking initiatives all **OVER** the state and **OVER** the month of **OCTOBER**.

In 2011, an estimated 30,000 participants took part in 178 walking events. There were 119 schools registered for Walk to School Day, 32 community and 27 workplace events that took part during the month.

Coordinated by the Heart Foundation in partnership with Departments of Transport, Sport and Recreation and Education, **Walk Over October** encourages Western Australians to reduce the number of short car trips by walking all or part of your journey to your destinations.

Combining walking with public transport helps to find some of the thirty minutes of physical activity recommended each day for good health.

Throughout October there will be many ways to get involved:

- Host a walking event at your school, workplace or in your community
- Participate in the corporate online walking challenge
- Join a Heart Foundation Walking group

Try one of the many beautiful walking trails across the state

Grab a copy of the Walking Guide book from www.transport.wa.gov.au for advice on walks across the state, or visit www.dec.wa.gov.au for information on some of Western Australia's world-class tracks and trails system.

For more information on events near you please visit www.walkoveroctober.com.au



Possible mosquito-borne virus noted in owls in the Perth area from volunteer registered rehabilitator Warren Goodwin

During 2011, a number of Boobook owls *Ninox boobook* and two Barn owls *Tyto alba* presented with disturbing neurological symptoms and/or various stages of blindness in one or both eyes.

Individual birds showed all, or only some of these symptoms. Some birds exhibited initial anorexia, and later developed symptoms such as torticollis and head tics (normally signs of inner ear or neurological damage). A number of these birds survived only through intensive treatment, while a few deaths were inevitable.

Frozen samples were tested by the Department of Agriculture; however, no conclusive diagnosis could be made, due to the quality of the samples having been compromised by freezing.

Other Boobook owls have been received exhibiting blindness in one eye, and the timing of this, (as per last year, at the onset of the rains) suggests that one of the mosquito borne viruses may be involved, with the potential to present in any species of raptor or owl.

Without positive identification from fresh pathology samples we can only speculate as to the specific cause of these symptoms. These samples will

need to be taken from the brain tissue of birds that are unable to be saved. These specimens should not be frozen.



Boobook Owl showing a more advanced stage of blindness in one eye



Boobook Owl showing neurological symptoms mentioned above

As I suspect that more cases will present again over this year, I will continue to monitor the situation and liaise with the Agricultural Department on this matter.

Should rehabilitators receive any raptors with these symptoms please contact Warren on **0448 055 020**.

WILDCARE helpline

FOR SICK, INJURED OR ORPHANED NATIVE WILDLIFE



(08) 9474 9055

Ningaloo Turtle Program

Currently advertising



Team Leader Internship Positions (8 weeks)

12 Volunteer Positions (5 weeks)

- Learn about and interact with marine turtles
- Contribute to a valuable conservation program
 - Help protect these threatened species
 - Meet new people
 - Develop your conservation skills

Visit the Ningaloo Turtle Program website at www.ningalooturtles.org.au or contact Chantelle Coote ph 08 9947 8045 or email: ningalooturtles@dec.wa.gov.au

This is a Program that does make a difference and you can help!



Department of
Environment and Conservation
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bhpbilliton


Australian Government
Department of the Environment,
Water, Heritage and the Arts

A vibrant network of volunteers happy to care for our natural environment

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT UNIT

Locked Bag 104
Bentley Delivery Centre
WA 6983

Phone: 08 9334 0279
Fax: 08 9334 0221
E-mail:
community.involvement@dec.wa.gov.au



Department of
Environment and Conservation

Our environment, our future



The CIU provides community members in WA with opportunities to support, be involved in, and contribute to, the work of DEC.

The CIU supports DEC volunteers as an integral component of the Western Australian community. Volunteering enriches the community through the delivery of environmental, social, economic and health benefits to individuals, local groups and communities, the state and the nation.

If you have an event or story you would like to feature in future editions of the newsletter, or have any comments or suggestions please contact the Community Involvement Unit via:

Community.involvement@dec.wa.gov.au

or call 9334 0582



For information on DEC volunteer programs, visit www.dec.wa.gov.au/content/category/16/183/341/

Check out the DECParks WA Flickr page for photos of parks and DEC volunteer programs—www.flickr.com/groups/decparcs/

Calling all volunteers with an interest in wildlife and education

The Ribbons of Blue program in DEC's Community Education Branch is seeking volunteers to support wetland field work with school children as part of our *Macroinvertebrate Snapshot 2012*.

In the *Macroinvertebrate Snapshot* students visit a local wetland and record what aquatic invertebrates live there, their results are published on our website.

It's always good fun and an 'eye-opener' into a part of our environment we don't often see.

Volunteers work in pairs to set up equipment, wade into the wetland (knee deep) to collect samples and pack up afterwards.

Teachers will run the learning activity with their students and manage their behaviour. The field work will be done at safe wetland sites around Perth (you may have a suggestion for a good wetland near you).

Ribbons of Blue will coordinate bookings, provide training and equipment, protective clothing and arrange a Working with Children Check.

If you are free between October 17 – 31 for up to three sessions, get in touch with us for more information or to register your interest. We'd love to hear from you!

Contact: **Richard Olive**

Phone: **6467 5127**

Mobile: **0407 981 539**

Email: richard.olive@dec.wa.gov.au



Kanyana Wildlife is seeking interested volunteers to become a part of the education team at Kanyana.

Expressions of interest are called from people with an interest in educating about our native wildlife.

You will need enthusiasm, a relaxed and easy manner, a clear voice and time during the day, or perhaps at night.

Please email your interest to info@kanyanawildlife.org.au

They are planning to have an information night for all interested people on August 23rd at 6:30pm.

You will be provided with a tour of the facility and information as to education opportunities within Kanyana. Kanyana is located at 120 Gilchrist Road, Lesmurdie WA 6076.

Wear warm clothes – it must be the high altitude that makes it so cold!!





QUARTERLY RETURN FOR INDIVIDUAL VOLUNTEERS

(summary of Volunteers' daily work record, kept separately)

Volunteer Name (please print):

Email:

Address:

Project Title:

District/Region:

Campground Hosts ONLY- Campsite name:

Date from:

Date to:

Month:	Week commencing:	Weekly total hours	Monthly total hours
	Week 1:		
	Week 2:		
	Week 3:		
	Week 4:		
	Week 5:		
	Week 1:		
	Week 2:		
	Week 3:		
	Week 4:		
	Week 5:		
	Week 1:		
	Week 2:		
	Week 3:		
	Week 4:		
	Week 5:		
		Quarterly Total:	

Signature / name of volunteer:

Date:

Signature / name of supervisor / wildlife officer (if applicable):

Date:



Please return to:

Department of Environment and Conservation
Community Involvement Unit
Locked Bag 104, Bentley Delivery Centre WA 6983
Or email: community.involvement@dec.wa.gov.au

Returns required each 1 October, 1 January, 1 April and 1 July