

30

years of
volunteers
1989–2019



Celebrating 30 years of volunteers

This year marks 30 years since the former Department of Conservation and Land Management’s formal volunteer program began.

Parks and Wildlife Service now manages more than 200 volunteer projects across the State which enable thousands of volunteers to contribute to the conservation, protection and promotion of Western Australia’s precious areas.

Volunteers are involved in real projects that contribute to the environmental, conservation and recreational goals of the department, such as campground hosting, track, trail and park maintenance, the Wildcare Helpline or science-based projects monitoring native plants and animals.

All volunteers are significant to our work and make a significant and meaningful contribution to what we can achieve, helping us complete tasks that would otherwise not be possible.

In this edition of the Volunteer News newsletter we are featuring some of our very special volunteers, highlighting the variety of work they carry out in supporting the Parks and Wildlife Service. You may have heard of some of the projects, such as the campground hosts, but there are others that are less-well known but still have a vital impact on our work.

For more information on volunteering opportunities, visit [the website](#). If you would like to share your volunteering story email PWSVolunteers@dbca.wa.gov.au

August 2019

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Department of Biodiversity,
Conservation and Attractions



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Hosts with the most



Campground Hosts WA

Kay and Rodger (pictured) are a pair of ex-Queenslanders who were recruited to become campground hosts by a couple of very enthusiastic existing Hosts.

Kay says "We were here to see WA and leave! Being part of the campground host family has enriched our lives with the opportunity to help rangers and other staff to keep the parks intact for the future. We help visitors to have great experiences (and fun) in national parks all over WA.

We are able to stay in some beautiful, magical places and interact with, and learn about, the wildlife and plants. We have met some amazing people from all over the world and made new friends.

In our opinion the Parks and Wildlife Service campgrounds and the campground host program are the best we have ever seen in Australia. Other States should check out what WA does and adopt their programs!

We love campground hosting so much that we now are registered on the Electoral Roll in WA and have WA driver's licences – we only go back East to visit!"

To get involved in campground hosting, please visit [the website](#).

Why are hosts important?

Senior Ranger Dan Petersen from Karijini National Park explains.

'If it wasn't for campground hosts we simply couldn't do our jobs. The commitment from our hosts volunteering their time ensures visitors receive a warm welcome to the campground and information about the park on arrival. Campground hosts are valued members of the Karijini team who all work together to enhance the visitor experience.

We (rangers) are out patrolling gorges and walk trails every day: maintaining visitor facilities and sharing our knowledge of the natural values of the area to keep people safe. This is only made possible through the generosity of our wonderful campground hosts - we couldn't do it all without them.'

A stirring effort



Eddie assisting rangers in Stirling Range National Park. Photo - DBCA

Eddie officially started as a DBCA volunteer in 2002 and has now been actively volunteering for more than 16 years.

However, from 2000 he was unofficially assisting around the Stirling Range National Park. Prior to this he was involved with the park as an SES and Gnowangerup Bush Fire Brigade (BFB) member and he was the voluntary Gnowangerup SES manager for many years. Eddie has volunteered almost 19,000 hours to the Parks and Wildlife Service.

Eddie is an amazing ambassador for the Stirling Range National Park, sharing his knowledge of orchids and the park with any visitor that is interested.

The local café owner loves having Eddie in for a coffee because the minute a tourist comes in with a question, they are directed straight to Eddie for the answers and a chat. He has exceptional knowledge of the park and has been involved in most works programs throughout his time as a volunteer.

Eddie won Volunteer of the Year award in 2017 and has previously won awards for Outstanding Service – thanks Eddie!



Environment Minister Stephen Dawson presenting Eddie Seaman with the Volunteer of the Year Award. Photo - DBCA

Over the years Eddie has been involved in several rescues of injured and lost visitors. One incident starts with a tourist lost on Bluff Knoll. The tourist was lost all night and, after a search team returning at midnight was unable to locate the tourist, Eddie volunteered to stay up all night with a police officer to maintain contact with the lost tourist. He was at the control point providing advice to the Department and Police until the tourist had been located and rescued late the next day.

The additional value that Eddie brings, through assisting visitors with information about the park, its attractions and safety considerations, as well as assisting rangers with general tasks, is hard to measure. Eddie benefits the park greatly by providing a welcoming experience, enabling the necessary messages to be passed onto visitors to enhance their experience all while protecting the natural environment.

Friends of Point Peron

The volunteer group Friends of Point Peron have had a busy and productive year.

Supported by the department, they have recently planted more than 2600 seedlings that were purchased through a grant from Coastcare.

The plants have been dug in deep, fertilised and watered with wetting agent and received a generous dump of rain, so they stand a good chance of surviving to be vital habitat for the area.

Thank you to the more than 100 volunteers who have contributed over 500 hours to planting this winter.

They still have a lot of work to do with weeding the area so if you'd like to get involved or find out more about their work, visit [the website](#).



*Friends of Point Peron end of planting season celebration.
Photo - James Mumme*

Conservation from different angles



Tanya tracking wildlife. Photo - Tanya Marwood

Tanya is a volunteer on several DBCA projects, including the Wildcare Helpline and fauna monitoring.

We asked Tanya to tell us why she does it.
“I have learnt an enormous amount about our environment and its animals and plants by volunteering for various projects in the department.

I've been out in the field several times trapping small mammals in the forests east of Manjimup, where I was

lucky enough to see a wild numbat scampering off into the undergrowth. I also got to see woylies, chuditch, quendas and brush-tailed possums.

Answering calls from the public on the Wildcare Helpline has taught me a lot about wildlife (and human!) behaviour and the ways we can help birds and other animals stay out of trouble, or assist them when they're having problems with traffic, pets or discarded fishing line.

Of course, I've also learnt a lot about dealing with people and heard about a wide range of situations, some of them very unusual and some hilarious.

My wildlife rehabilitation work has taught me a lot about the identity of various animals and birds, how they live, what kinds of problems they have in human-dominated environments and how we can help them.

These unique experiences have helped me in my current work on the University of WA's Animal Ethics Committee, and other areas of interest and wouldn't be available to me unless I was a volunteer.”

Golden Valley Tree Park

Nestled in the hills south of Balingup, the Heritage-listed Golden Valley Tree Park is one of WA's largest tree collections.

Since 1980 the park has been managed through a partnership between community volunteers and DBCA. It has built upon one-hundred-year-old early settler plantings of oaks and elms, showcasing over 500 tree species, divided into two sections.

The Australian Collection features many south west tree species and mimics the landscapes of Australian tree associations, while the World Collection, planted in the "English Landscape Style", has a large collection of oaks and other interesting trees.

Each year more than 2000 hours are contributed by around 50 volunteers to maintain and grow the tree collection. The Park is open to visitors daily by gold coin donation.

Founding volunteers Andrew Thamo and Chrissy Sharp won Volunteer of the Year awards in 2018. Chrissy has many positive thoughts on volunteering with the department, "Andrew and I have been enormously privileged to have played an important role, as volunteers, in creating an arboretum in the South West. Starting out nearly forty years ago, I guess we played a part in pioneering the department's volunteer program. In their embrace of collaboration, and with



Above - Andrew Thamo and Chrissy Sharp. Photo - Cindy Bosvel

Below - Golden Valley Tree Park. Photo - Helen Hulme-Gerrard.

extraordinary support from hundreds of south west volunteers, we have together created a valuable and loved public asset. The department have been so supportive of the project and community's enthusiasm.

Volunteering for DBCA is a classic case of the more you give, the more you get back. Contributing to managing a park has been deeply rewarding. It has kept our lives interesting – we are busy and engaged in something bigger than our individual selves. Isn't that the secret of happiness?"

To find out more www.goldenvalleytreepark.org.au



Weed warriors

For several years, Jan and Joe King have waged a personal war against weeds in John Forrest National Park.

They have concentrated their efforts on an area of the park where the department has the best chance of getting the bush back to its natural state.

Joe is always tinkering, servicing and cleaning equipment and Jan ensures that there are always



Environment Minister Stephen Dawson presenting Jan and Joe King with their Outstanding Service Award. Photo - DBCA

some homemade treats provided to enhance the waistlines of the park staff.

When they aren't working in the park, they are applying for grants, or managing the Friends of John Forrest group.

You'd be hard pressed to find anyone else so dedicated to the cause and the main testament to Joe and Jan is the quiet way they go about their chosen task, always with a smile and always concerned that they are achieving the most that they can for the park.

Paul Udinga, Ranger in the Perth Hills, explains why Jan and Joe are so valuable to his team.

'It's hard to put into words the praise that Jan and Joe deserve - Jan and Joe's dedication to the cause is a source of admiration and inspiration to the park staff - their efforts have greatly extended the effectiveness of the weed program far beyond what could be achieved using staff and the park funding alone.

They have made such a difference to the park and their achievements will be enjoyed by generations to come.'

Long serving and conserving

One of the department's long-serving volunteers is Keith White.

He is a specialist in trapping feral cats and has trapped hundreds in the Capes area over the past 20 years.

Keith has assisted with community training sessions, educating people about feral cats and how to trap them, and has helped us with many cat-related projects.

Now retired in Augusta, Keith has always had a love of the bush with special interest in the birds and animals. Keith has a particular interest in cats, large and small, and has developed skills in tracking and monitoring these feline predators.

Keith was given the chance to volunteer in feral animal control and jumped at the chance to help protect the bush that he loves, contributing an enormous amount of time to the cause.

It has been a very interesting time for Keith, designing his own cages, making them, and experimenting with different baits – all of which have been successful.



Keith White receiving a Long Service Award. Photo - DBCA

Keith, supported by his equally skilled and knowledgeable wife Jan, has removed countless populations of invasive species from sensitive environments largely in the Capes area but also in other parts of Western Australia.

This contribution has undoubtedly provided much needed protection for native species in these areas.

Thanks Keith!

Campground Host vacancies

Leeuwin-Naturaliste National Park

Conto's and Jarrahdene campgrounds

September 2019 onwards

Contact Ranger John.Prins@dbca.wa.gov.au

Wellington National Park

Honeymoon Pool campground

August 2019 onwards

Contact Ranger Craig.Letica@dbca.wa.gov.au

Yalgorup National Park

Martins Tank campground

December 2019

January 2020

Contact Ranger Ben.Byrne@dbca.wa.gov.au

Millstream Chichester National Park

Miliyanha campground

September 2019

Contact Ranger Kate.McNicol@dbca.wa.gov.au

Cape Le Grand National Park

Lucky Bay East campground

August 2019

May 2020

June 2020

Lucky Bay West campground

December 2019

January 2020

April 2020

Contact Ranger Craig.Williams@dbca.wa.gov.au

Beelu National Park

Perth Hills Discovery Centre

First three weeks of September, all of November and the first three weeks of December 2019.

This post is pretty flexible and opportunities to stay for a weekend or week or two could still be useful.

Contact Lynette.Marshall@dbca.wa.gov.au



Campground hosts Andy and Debra and Ranger Ben Byrne. Photo - DBCA

Volunteering for wildlife

Last year, volunteers assisting with the Helpline received more than 13,000 calls from concerned members of the public looking for help with sick or injured native animals.

In addition to these calls, more than 16,000 unique visits were made to [the website](#) from people searching for wildlife advice.

To assist with the large volume of interest, there is an app designed for you to carry information about what to do if you find sick or injured native animals, without the need to call the Helpline.

The app contains links and phone numbers to assist in dealing with cane toads, stranded whales and dolphins, as well as information about becoming a volunteer.

You can still call the Helpline via the app if the information you need isn't covered.

Using the 'Find Help' section, the app can put you in touch with a list of the nearest wildlife rehabilitators, or find nearby vets wherever you are in Western Australia.

If you've found sick or injured wildlife, call the Wildcare Helpline on (08) 9474 9055, visit the website or use the new app, available to download FREE on the [Google Play](#) and [Apple iTunes](#) stores.



Have you visited Dampier Archipelago?



The department is conducting research to find out who is visiting the Dampier Archipelago and what activities they enjoy doing while they're there.

If you have ever spent time in the Dampier Archipelago then we'd love to hear from you.

Please let us know what you thought by completing this [short survey](#).

Snorkelling in Dampier Archipelago. Photo - Tourism Western Australia

The Volunteer Coordination Unit provides community members within WA with opportunities to support, be involved in, and contribute to, the work of the Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions Parks and Wildlife Service.

The unit supports 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 us. All photos credited to Parks and Wildlife Service unless otherwise stated.

Volunteer Coordination Unit Parks and Wildlife Service

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