



RIVERVIEW

No.1 THE SWAN AND CANNING RIVERS CLEANUP PROGRAM NEWSLETTER May/June 1995

This is new!

Welcome to the first edition of **RiverView** – the newsletter of the **Swan and Canning Rivers Cleanup Program** – brought to you by the Swan River Trust.

The Cleanup Program, launched by the Western Australian Government in May 1994, arose out of community concern over the increasing incidence of algal blooms in the upper reaches of the Swan and Canning rivers.

The Cleanup Program aims to control algal blooms, improve catchment management to reduce the flow of nutrients which feed the algae, and encourage widespread community participation in all stages of the cleanup.

Three major steps have already been taken to protect and improve the health of our waterways:

* more funding for the Swan River Trust has been the catalyst for the coordination of a large variety of estuarine and catchment research already underway through the universities, CSIRO, the Water Authority, the Department of Environmental Protection and the Waterways Commission.

* the establishment of the Western Australian Estuarine Research Foundation has provided start-up funds for research projects into river conservation and management;

* through the Swan River volunteers program, funding has also been provided for the provision of resources and training support for community groups involved in the care of the river and surrounding wetlands.

The objective of this newsletter is to provide information on the activities of the Swan River Trust and its officers to anyone interested in the future health of our river system. The newsletter should also become a link between community groups throughout the Swan-Canning catchment – offering a central voice through which news about river conservation activities, training workshops and resources can be announced.

We encourage you to support the magazine by contacting the Swan River Trust community relations officer Tim Larcombe on 327 9730 if you want to advertise any coming events in your area. If you've got a story to tell we'll do everything we can to get your story told, through this newsletter and beyond into the mainstream media.

The newsletter will be a bi-monthly publication.

Cleanup booklet, see page three

Public views sought

Over 80 representatives from key interest groups attended workshops during March to find out what support is needed to help people participate in river and catchment management.

The main outcome will be the creation of a resource network providing information, training and support to community groups and individuals throughout the Swan-Canning catchment.

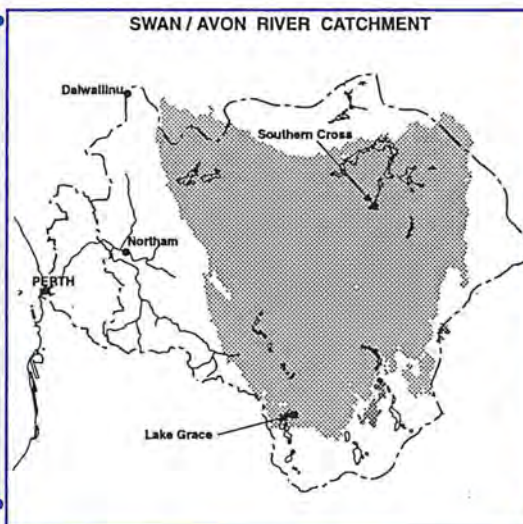
National Landcare Program (NLP) funding of \$507,000 over three years has been allocated to the project.

The consultation process also called for written submissions and about 60 were received. Interviews with representatives from key interest groups were also conducted. Recommendations arising from the consultation will be considered by the Trust during May.

The main responsibility of the resource network is to the Swan catchment, but it will link closely with a similar facility being developed in the Avon region. The NLP funded project is tied to the Trust's State Government initiated Swan-Canning Rivers Cleanup Program.

How big is the catchment?

The water catchment that feeds the Swan-Canning river system covers an area larger than Tasmania. At 140,000 sq kms, the catchment stretches from Dalwallinu in the north, past Southern Cross in the east and Lake Grace to the southeast. It supports a population of over 1.4 million and includes WA's major agricultural districts.



INSIDE

- New officers appointed to help facilitate catchment management plans
- Living Streams Award 1995 ... Have you put your group's entry in?
- Latest publications

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Are you in our Rivercare Group Directory? See back page for more info

Success Hill bush fires sprout good will

A series of fires at Success Hill in Bassendean has been the trigger for cooperation between the Swan Valley Nyungah Community and volunteer conservation groups in the area.

Nyungah leader Robert Bropho has met with Kaye Pearson from the Success Hill Action Group and Bevan Carter from the Bassendean Preservation Society to decide a strategy to save the small piece of bushland.

Mr Bropho said Success Hill was very important historically and spiritually to his people. The view from the top, of the Swan Valley and the distant hills, is excellent and clear water springs can be found throughout the area.

"In the early days Nyungahs travelling through the country would stop here and camp," Mr Bropho said, standing by the burnt out tree that formed the focus of the camp site.

Revegetation and reticulation efforts of previous years were wiped out by the fire. Many exotic weeds, returning following rain, will have to be removed, and indigenous



Sacred spring: Robert Bropho (Swan Valley Nyungah Community) with Bevan Carter (Bassendean Preservation Group) and Kaye Pearson (Success Hill Action Group) at the fire damaged Success Hill site — an area of historical and spiritual importance for the Nyungah community.

trees — local varieties of the woolly bush, banksia and sheoak — planted in time for winter rains.

If the site is not secured, heavy rains will wash the topsoil down the banks into the river. One benefit of the recent fire, however, was the clearing of a big batch of lantana from a small gully next to the river that revealed a fresh water spring.

The Success Hill Action Group,

following Landcare funding last year, has also begun a flora and fauna survey of Bennett Brook south of Benara Road.

The survey, in cooperation with the Bassendean Preservation Group and the Nyungah Community, will include an inventory of local plant and animal life, historical background, including Nyungah dreaming, and a management plan for such things as fire control and site protection.

"Good work is happening because the groups are talking to one another," said group coordinator Kaye Pearson.

But Mrs Pearson said housing and transport infrastructure developments associated with the northeast corridor were putting increasing pressure on waterways and wetlands in the area. ■

For more information contact the Success Hill Action Group on 377 3710.

Ribbons of Blue

... is a water quality monitoring program initially set up to educate and train school students. In the metropolitan area there are now 29 primary schools, 31 secondary schools and several community groups actively involved in monitoring the Swan and Canning river system and the freshwater lakes on the coastal plain.

The network now covers much of the southwest of WA and is growing each year. Many schools incorporate Ribbons of Blue into their science or social studies courses.

The information from water quality monitoring activities is analysed and, in several cases, action plans developed to improve the local water quality.

"The most successful programs are those where strong links are developed between schools, community groups and local government," said Ribbons of Blue officer Susan Worley.

If teachers, community group members or local councillors want to find out more about Ribbons of Blue they can contact Paul Reiffer (community), Susan Worley (secondary schools), and Louise Young (primary schools) on 327 9777.

WEED STATS

Western Australia has 838 environmental weed plants representing 11% of the total flora. Victoria has 1221 species of weed, or 28% of the total flora of that state. In our Southwest region, 418 recorded weed species comprise 2 ferns, 73 grasses, 186 herbs, 57 geophytes, 25 vines, 44 shrubs and 11 trees.

Source: Keighery, G (1994), *Bushland weeds overview*, in *Weeding Western Australia*.

1995 Living Streams Award

School, business, local government and community groups could be eligible to win a \$1000 award in recognition of their care for local streams and foreshores.

The Living Streams Award — sponsored by the Waterways Commission, the Department of Agriculture, and the Water Authority — is open to WA entrants in the bi-annual Landcare Australia Awards who have achieved significant results, or initiated a significant project, to rehabilitate a drain, creek, river or estuary foreshore.

First-time winners in 1993, Bob and Dawn Porter of "Riverside Farmers", were chosen for their pioneering contribution in protecting a 22 km stretch of the Murchison River from grazing and allowing successful revegetation. They also protected 10 kms of another major watercourse on their property and managed 580 ha of remnant vegetation adjoining the river.

A separate \$3000 Wetland Conservation Award — sponsored by the Department of Environmental Protection — will recognise lake and swamp conservation projects.

The closing date for entries is Friday, 14 July 1995. To get more info and an entry form contact Sue Graham at the Department of Agriculture, on (09) 368 3831.

NATIONAL LANDCARE AUSTRALIA AWARDS

New Trust officers to help guide community projects

RIVERCARE groups operating within the Swan-Canning catchment have been given a boost with the appointment of three new Swan River Trust environmental officers.

The officers will help community groups, local government and volunteer groups in the Ellen Brook, Southern-Wungong River, Upper Canning, and other urban sub-catchments collect information, identify issues and implement recommendations relating to better catchment management.

Through community involvement, the officer for the Ellen Brook and Southern-Wungong River sub-catchments, Wesley Horwood, and the officer for the Upper Canning sub-catchment, Nicole Siemon, will also prepare catchment management plans.

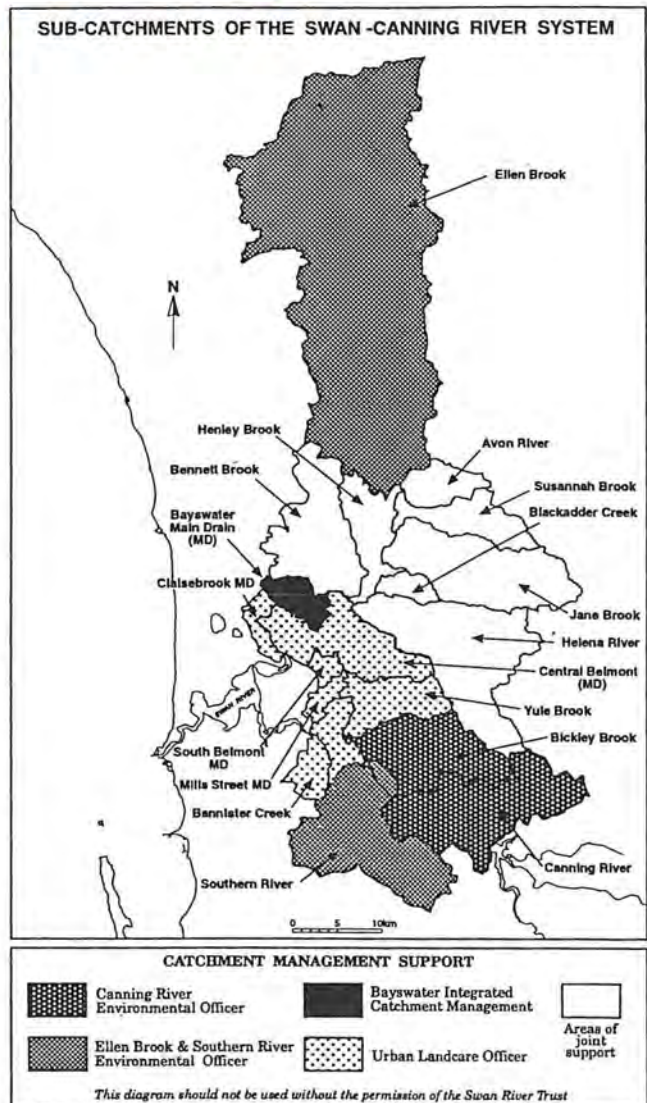
The environmental officer responsible for the other urban sub-catchments, Louisa Barnacle, will function more as a facilitator, helping community groups develop action plans and instigate activities. Initial emphasis will be on those sub-catchments where local government and community groups have begun investigations into water quality and pollution problems. These include Claisebrook Main Drain (MD), Blackadder Creek, South Belmont MD, Mills Street MD, and Bannister Creek.

While these officers will be based at the Trust's head office in London House, they will spend a great deal of time in the field. Funding for the appointments comes from both Federal and State Government grants through the National Landcare Program and Swan-Canning Cleanup Program.

Principal environmental officer, Bev Thurlow, said that while not all sub-catchments of the Swan-Canning River system will come under the direct guidance of the new officers, they will assist in identifying the needs of other sub-catchments (see map).

"Many sub-catchments have yet to be fully defined on a nutrient discharge basis," Ms Thurlow said. "This will be done as the program develops and action will arise out of the process."

"The program will begin in areas where local government and community groups are part of the way toward developing management plans. Other sub-catchments - such as those within the hills district -



will come on line as local groups coordinate and awareness grows."

The sub-catchment feeding the Bayswater Main Drain already has an established management plan and a coordinating officer, Rosemary Glass. She has been appointed by the Bayswater Integrated Catchment Management Committee. ■



TV ad zeros in on algae

A two-member camera crew from BP Australia was in Perth recently to make a TV commercial to promote Landcare activities.

The ad - part of a nationwide campaign - will focus on algae and features footage of the Swan River Trust boat crew carrying out research on the river and Ribbons of Blue school children from Forest Crescent Primary taking water samples in the Canning River near Thornlie (pictured left).

A commercial was also shot for the Albany region focusing on riverine plants. The ads are expected to run from now until the end of the year.

Cleanup booklet

Action For The Future

...is the title of a booklet soon to be released by the Swan River Trust. It outlines the steps currently being taken - as part of the Swan and Canning Rivers Cleanup Program - to clean and protect the river system from the excess nutrients that cause algal blooms.

Action For The Future

...will give you all the details you need to become better informed about the Swan and Canning Rivers Cleanup Program.

CRREPA-Canning City Council come together over Bull Creek

One of the most active and organised conservation groups in Perth is CRREPA — the Canning River Residents Environment Protection Association. The name may be a mouthful but the work they're doing in the Canning River and Bull Creek wetland areas is providing inspiration to others.



CRREPA members Margo Ross, Vera Colley and Maureen Hopkins with Canning City Council horticultural officer Lee Eacott as they sort and classify wetland plant seeds at the council nursery.

Formed in May last year, the group has recently received approval for 12,000 *Juncus* (shorerush) plants through Greening Australia and the local council has chipped in by offering 2000 paperbark, 500 river gums and 500 sheoak seedlings.

The group is using the Canning City Council nursery as a site for propagating the seed they collect along the river and wetland.

CRREPA now divides itself into four main interest groups — Water Sampling & Testing, Seed Collection & Propagation, Re-planting Foreshore Vegetation, Foreshore Vegetation Survey, and Bird Survey.

"We've received a lot of help from the local council and we've forged excellent links with the Swan River Trust," said CRREPA vice-president Margot Ross.

"The Trust have sent members of their staff to teach us how to collect and test water samples and help us develop a set of rehabilitation guidelines."

For more information you can contact CRREPA through Margo Ross at 457 7827. ■

Do you want to get on our Rivercare Group Directory?

The Rivercare Group Directory will provide a list of community groups involved in managing our waterways — and that means any group caring for wetlands, rivers, drains and streams. For those of you familiar with the Urban Bushland Community Group Directory put out last year by the Urban Bushland Council, the format and style will be very similar.

The Rivercare Group Directory will provide a list of groups by catchment (see map page 3), as well as a list of government and non-government support groups.

If your group wants to be in our Rivercare Group Directory, just call us on 327 9730 or fax 327 9770 with the following information by May 31:

* group name and postal address * contact name and phone number * group objective * group areas * major projects * and a list of resources and publications, if any.



**SWAN
RIVER
TRUST**

Protecting the Swan-Canning river system for the future

For more information contact:

SWAN RIVER TRUST
16TH FLOOR
216 ST GEORGES TERRACE
PERTH 6000

PHONE: 327 9700 FAX: 327 9770

WHAT'S ON

Friends of Ellis Brook Valley

On the second Wednesday of each month the group hosts morning tea and activities in the valley. Meeting 10 May at 9am. Call Margaret Robinson on 459 8852 for details.

Bayswater Greenwork

Every second Saturday the group meets at Baigup and work either at Baigup or at Kiara Wetlands. Meeting 20 May at 9am. Call Michael MacShane on 228 0501 for details.

Wildflower Society

Plant identification workshop, Saturday 29 July, 1-4pm. Call 381 4062 for details.

Canning River Regional Park Guides

Sunday 14 May: *Aboriginal uses of the park*, 9am; Monday 5 June: *Foundation Day* family activities, 10am, Kent Street Weir. Sunday 2 July: *Winter in the park* with naturalist Eric McCrum, 9am, Greenfield Street Bridge. Call Stephen Faulds at 457 6707 for details.

Bayswater ICM

Coming up ... winter planting in artificial wetland near Morley Galleria. Plus drain streamlining. Call BICM coordinator Rosemary Glass on 370 3370.

HOT OFF THE PRESS

Available from the Swan River Trust unless otherwise stated.

Reports

- * *Albany Waterways Management Programme*, Report No.54, 1995.
- * *Estimates of Nutrient Streamload in the Swan-Canning Catchment 1987-1982*, Report No. 20, December 1994.
- * *Harmful Phytoplankton Surveillance in Western Australia*, Report No.43, 1994.
- * *Securing the Future: Achievements of the Peel Inlet and Harvey Estuary Management Strategy 1989-1994*, December 1994.

Pamphlets

- * *Swan-Avon ICM: Introducing a new program for sustainable management of the Swan-Avon River Catchment*, March 1995.
- * *Living Streams: Bringing watercourses back to life*, Waterways Advice No.12, February 1995 (revised).

Videos

- * *What is Groundwater?* (12 mins), available from the Water Authority.