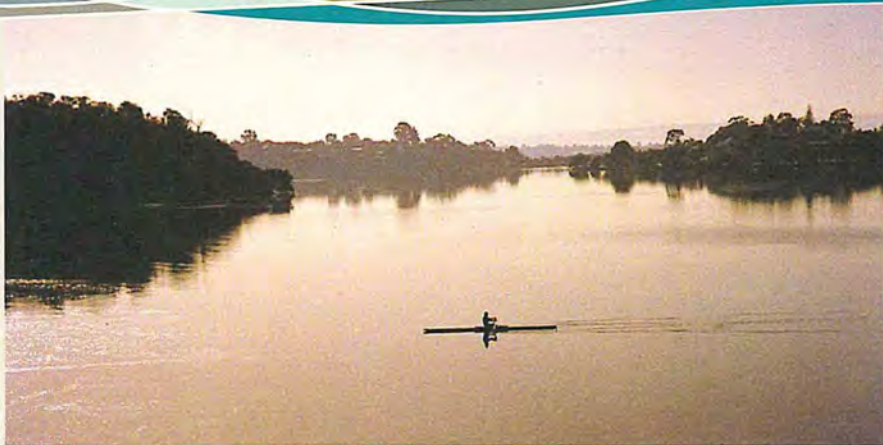


RiverView



Government of Western Australia
Summer 2006 | No. 38



THE LIBRARY
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- 7 MAR 2006
*Swan Alcoa
Landcare Program*

Greater protection for the rivers

The Trust's community consultation process conducted last year demonstrated that many West Australians support greater cooperation and continuity in the management of the Swan and Canning rivers.

New legislation introduced to State Parliament in November last year will enable the Swan River Trust to better protect the Swan and Canning rivers for current and future generations.

When passed, the legislation will pave the way for the establishment of the Swan Canning Riverpark, and the development of a river protection strategy and management programs with defined targets.

The community will have the opportunity to be involved in establishing these targets and management arrangements.

More transparent and streamlined processes for assessing development proposals affecting the river will be put in place, as well as improved enforcement arrangements.

Swan River Trust chairman Charlie Welker said the riverpark would enable State agencies and local government to work together to manage the rivers as a whole system, rather than a series of separate areas.

"The riverpark will include the waters and riverbed sections of the Swan, Canning, Helena and Wungong rivers and fringing Crown reserves," Mr Welker said.

"This legislation heralds a new era for the rivers, which have long been considered State heritage icons, and will ensure they are properly managed for future generations."

The new legislation will replace the existing *Swan River Trust Act 1988* and the *Environmental Protection (Swan and Canning Rivers) Policy 1997*.

Welcome new Minister



It is with pleasure that the Swan River Trust welcomes new Environment Minister, Mr Mark McGowan.

Former Environment Minister Dr Judy Edwards was a Cabinet member from 2001 and resigned in January.

Dr Edwards is widely commended for her Ministerial achievements, in particular her introduction of proposed new legislation to greater protect the Swan and Canning rivers.

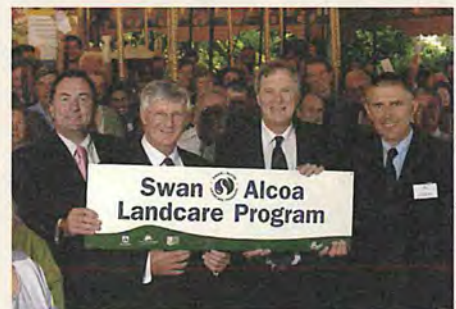
Caring for the Swan and Canning rivers

More than \$570,000 in landcare funding was received by 41 community environmental groups at the Swan Alcoa Landcare Program 2006 funding ceremony held in February at Perth Zoo.

The 2006 funding assists community groups to undertake 100 on-ground projects in the metropolitan area.

Swan River Trust chairman Charlie Welker said corporate support was vital in the management of our natural resources.

"The Trust works continuously to address pressures on the river system, but it is these key relationships that play a pivotal role in restoring and protecting the river system," Mr Welker said.



From left to right - Riverton MLA Tony McRae, Alcoa Refinery manager Kim Horne, Swan River Trust chairman Charlie Welker and Swan Catchment Council a/chairman Colin Heinzman.

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Kent Street Weir water level trial

Water has been released from the Kent Street Weir Pool on a trial basis this summer in an effort to control recurrent algal blooms.

Originally scheduled for a two-month period from December to January, the trial has been extended due to unseasonably high water levels.

Swan River Trust environment programs manager Anthony Sutton said the warm, still water that collected behind the weir in summer provided ideal conditions for potentially toxic blue-green algal blooms.

"It is hoped the release of water from the pool will help to flush out high nutrient water and remove algal blooms as they form," Mr Sutton said.

"The trial forms part of the Swan-Canning Cleanup Program's long-term strategy to reduce nutrient inputs into our waterways, thereby reducing the occurrence of algal blooms."

Access across the walkway has been restricted during the trial while the weir boards are being adjusted.

The trial is a collaboration between the Swan River Trust, Department of Environment, City of Canning and Department for Conservation and Land Management.



Kent Street Weir
Photo provided courtesy of Wasele Hosja, Department of Environment (DoE).



Restoration works completed at Maxwell Rd in Caversham. Photo supplied courtesy of the North Metro Catchment Group.

Revegetation of Caversham site

Revegetation works carried out by the North Metro Catchment Group following a 2004 sewage spill behind Maxwell Road in Caversham are now complete.

A joint investigation by the Environmental Enforcement Unit and the Swan River Trust found that an estimated 2.5 million litres of untreated sewage had discharged into the Swan River in October 2004.

Forensic and scientific evidence indicated the spill was caused by a malfunction of a section of submerged pipe, owned by the Water Corporation.

The Water Corporation worked with the North Metro Catchment Group to conduct immediate foreshore erosion controls, which included the installation of coil logs along the riverbank at the site.

The Swan River Trust provided advice to the Water Corporation to restore the river foreshore disturbed during the cleanup of the sewage.

A species of club rush was planted due to the success of adjacent club rush beds in controlling riverbank erosion.

Following the installation of a single row of logs to further prevent erosion, it is intended that the site is now self-sufficient.

Trust cleans up after Skyworks

A skip bin, clothesline and large chest freezer were some of the items removed from the Swan River and foreshore following the Skyworks display on Australia Day.

Waterways manager Denis Doak said Trust officers were kept busy cleaning up the river and foreshore following the event.

"Despite the amount of litter being down on previous years we still found the usual items in the river such as food and beverage containers," Mr Doak said.



A skip bin was removed from the Swan River after Skyworks.



Trusts responds to oil spill



A leak from an oil pipeline in Fremantle Harbour was reported to the Swan River Trust in December 2005.

Waterways officers assisted in the cleanup operations. They used the Trust articulated loader to recover material from beaches near the Leeuwin boat ramp at Preston Point in East Fremantle.

About eight tonnes of contaminated sand and weed were recovered from the point.

The cause of the spill is being investigated.

Stakeholder function

A stakeholder function held in December 2005 brought together key contributors to the Swan-Canning Cleanup Program and the proposed new legislation.

Former Environment Minister Dr Judy Edwards launched the *Swan-Canning Cleanup Program Action Plan: Final Evaluation Report* to stakeholders and outlined the proposed new legislation.

Swan River Trust chairman Charlie Welker discussed the achievements of the Swan-Canning Cleanup Program and a new strategic direction for the Trust's management of the Swan and Canning rivers.

Attendees included stakeholders from local and State Government, community groups, sub-regional groups and the business sector.



Trust chairman Charlie Welker with former Environment Minister Dr Judy Edwards and Trust general manager Rod Hughes.

Swan River Trust on algal bloom alert

The Swan River Trust was on algal bloom alert throughout January 2006 following heavy rainfall and subsequent high flows through the Avon River.



Sediment plume from the Swan River at the estuary mouth in Fremantle. Photo provided courtesy of Dieter Tracey, DoE.

An Incident Response Team was set up following heavy rainfall caused by cyclones Clare and Daryl in preparation for a possible river event, such as an algal bloom.

Trust general manager Rod Hughes said there was the potential for heavy rains to bring large amounts of nutrients into the rivers.

"Increased flows caused water discolouration throughout the Swan River and with the return to warmer, sunny conditions there was the potential for algal blooms," Mr Hughes said.

"Additional monitoring and analysis of water quality samples was established throughout the river system.

"Results showed medium to high levels of algal activity, which is the seasonal norm for this time of year. No troublesome algae were washed down from the catchment."

Members of the public were reminded of the Department of Health's standing advice not to eat shellfish from the rivers.

The public were also asked to be "fertilise wise" and to report any activities that may be harmful to the rivers and shorelines by calling 9278 0900 or the emergency after-hours hotline on 0419 192 845.

Grants for foreshore restoration

Under the Swan River Trust's *Riverbank* program, \$1 million is available in 2005-06 for foreshore restoration and protection activities.

In March 2005, local and State Government agency land managers were invited to apply for Round 1, 2005-06 *Riverbank* funding.

Twenty projects to the value of \$192,131 (GST exclusive) were approved by the Trust to receive *Riverbank* funding in Round 1.

Expressions of interest for Round 2 *Riverbank* funding closed in December last year and will be announced in May 2006.

For more information on *Riverbank* funding, please contact the Swan River Trust on 9278 0900.

Round 1 Projects include

- foreshore restoration works at Prawn Bay, Johannah St, North Fremantle
- river wall repairs at JH Abrahams Reserve, Crawley
- development of a foreshore management and revegetation plan for the Swan Regional Riverside Park, Viveash
- control of invasive weeds on the Nedlands Foreshore at Point Resolution
- control of 'Taro' weed infestations on the Canning River and tributaries
- foreshore erosion control plan for the Ashfield Parade foreshore, Ashfield
- foreshore rehabilitation works at Canning River Regional Park, Masons Landing to Greenfield Street Bridge
- restoration and enhancement works at Attadale Bush Forever Conservation Reserve, Burke Drive, Attadale
- planting of local native sedges and erosion control works at Burke Drive Foreshore, Attadale
- foreshore restoration works at Kelmscott and Roleystone foreshore
- foreshore restoration works at Thornlie, Gosnells, Kenwick and Huntingdale foreshore



Great Gardens takes out top environmental honour

The Great Gardens environmental education program won the Promoting Behaviour Change category of the 2005 WA Environment Awards.

Winners of all 11 categories of the awards were announced at a special presentation ceremony held at the Hyatt Regency in November.

Sponsored by the Swan River Trust, the Great Gardens team has worked consistently with local government, community groups and business to provide environmental education and community behaviour change opportunities.

Trust communications manager Wendy Yorke said the award provided excellent recognition for the work of the team and the support the Trust had shown the program since its inception.

"More than 8,400 urban landholders have participated in the program since 2003, making it the largest project of its kind in the state," Mrs Yorke said.

"The program has been developed using community based social marketing techniques and continues to expand based on the latest scientific principles and information, which is what makes it so effective."

For more information about the upcoming 2006 Autumn series of Great Gardens workshops, go to www.greatgardens.info or contact the Swan River Trust on 9278 0900.



Landcare Solutions' Chris Ferreira accepts the award on behalf of the Great Gardens team.



Increasing oxygen levels in the Swan River

Low levels of oxygen in the upper reaches of the Swan River have prompted the State Government to investigate the feasibility of operating a large-scale oxygenation plant.

The government has committed \$250,000 to investigate the oxygenation program in the Swan River and a further \$87,000 to maintain oxygenation equipment currently used in the Canning River.

Swan River Trust chairman Charlie Welker said oxygen trials had previously been conducted in the Swan River, but on a much smaller scale.



Trust chairman Charlie Welker announces the oxygenation plant to the media at East St Jetty in Maylands.

"There is concern that a lack of oxygen, together with prolonged algal blooms, is resulting in fish deaths, particularly during the autumn months," Mr Welker said.

"A successful oxygenation program has been operating in the Canning River for the past five years.

"Data collected during this time has indicated positive results, with an increase in oxygen levels and a significant decrease in nutrient levels."

Oxygenation involves pumping low-oxygen water from the bottom of the river to a mixing plant where it is injected with oxygen and then returned to the river.

Low oxygen levels in the Swan and Canning rivers have been recognised as a major cause of nutrient release from river sediments and loss of ecological function.

Oxygenated water promotes the removal of nitrogen through chemical processes and helps break down organic materials in the sediment, improving water quality and providing better conditions for aquatic life.

Catchments, Corridors and Coasts

The Swan River Trust will sponsor a Rivercare day as part of this year's Catchments, Corridors and Coasts program on Wednesday 26 April 2006.

Communications manager Wendy Yorke said the day will offer a hands-on approach to learning about caring for the Swan and Canning rivers, catchments and foreshores, through canoeing and environmental education demonstrations such as the Great Gardens program.

what's on

March

- 5 Community Cleanup Australia Day
Swan River Trust hosting cleanup at
Point Walter, Bicton, Swan River
- 12 City to Port bicycle ride
- 17-31 Heavenly Hectares seminars
- 28-29 Local Government Foreshore Management
workshop

April

- 2 Swan-Canning Cleanup Program Community
Expo – Autumn River Festival
- 19-27 Catchments, Corridors and Coasts program

For more information on these activities, please contact the Swan River Trust on 9278 0900 or email info@swanrivertrust.wa.gov.au.

Community Expo

Have you ever wondered how algal blooms occur or how the Swan River Trust looks after the rivers?

Work is underway for a Community Expo featuring the Swan-Canning Cleanup Program projects, including scientific demonstrations and hands-on activities.

The free expo will be part of the Autumn River Festival at Riverside Gardens, Bayswater on Sunday 2 April 2006.

Mark this date in your calendar and visit the Trust's marquee to find out how you can HELP KEEP OUR RIVERS HEALTHY.

Foreshore management workshop

Managing river foreshore areas is an important responsibility for many local governments in the Swan-Canning Catchment.

A two-day workshop in March aims to provide local government employees with the knowledge, skills and tools required to best manage foreshore areas.

The workshop will cover issues from planning approvals, foreshore assessment, consultation processes, techniques in design and restoration, and case studies and site visits.

DATE: 28 & 29 March 2006

VENUE: Piney Lakes Environmental Education Centre, Winthrop

TIME: 8:30 am – 4:30 pm

COST: Free, all meals provided

To register your interest in attending please contact Brendan Nock (EMRC) by Monday 20 March 2006 on 9424 2248 or email Brendan.Nock@emrc.org.au.

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Caring for the Swan and Canning rivers



South-East Regional Centre for Urban Landcare officer Tom Atkinson shares his experience in managing urban wetlands with SFNC participants at the Liege St Wetland in Cannington.

Skills for Nature Conservation

The 2006 Skills for Nature Conservation (SFNC) training calendar, supported by the Trust's Swan-Canning Cleanup Program, has been released complete with a year of enticing and informative workshops.

Workshops such as "Subterranean safari – exploring the karst and cave systems of the Swan Coastal Plain" focus on educating participants about Perth's unique ecosystems.

Other workshops have been designed for groups and individuals already working to protect metropolitan bushland and wetlands, and aim to develop participants' skills. These include "Wetland management on private property" and "Getting to grips with feral animals in Perth's bushland".

The workshops are run in conjunction with the Department of Environment's Swan Catchment Centre, Greening Australia WA and the Department of Conservation and Land Management's Urban Nature program.

To view the calendar, visit the Swan Catchment Centre website at www.wrc.wa.gov.au/swanavon/ or contact Michelle Walker on 9374 3320.

Call for public comment

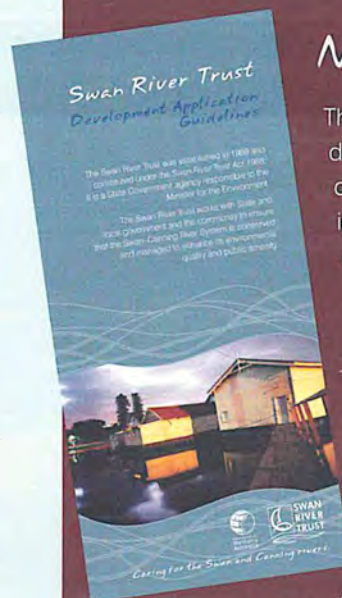
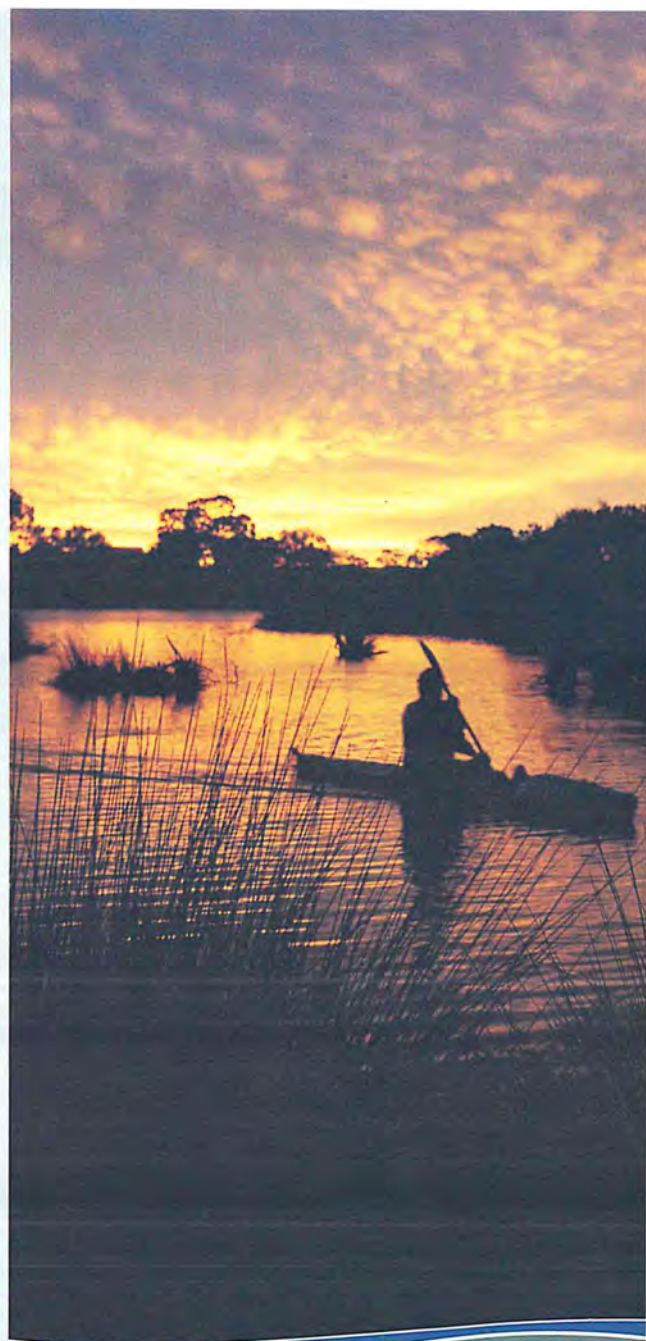
The Swan River Trust has called for public comment on a proposed two-storey building next to the rowing club boatshed at Hinds Reserve in Bayswater.

Statutory Assessments manager Paul Stephens said the proposed development would see the existing amenities building demolished to make way for a new building that will include a commercial café, function area and kitchen on the upper floor, and a kiosk, public toilets and storage area on the ground floor.

"The proposed new building would be located slightly closer to the river but the footprint would remain the same as the existing building," he said.

"A private operator selected by the City of Bayswater following a tender process would be responsible for the commercial operation of the new facilities."

The proposal can be viewed on the Swan River Trust website at www.swanrivertrust.wa.gov.au or in hard copy during normal business hours at the City of Bayswater or Swan River Trust.



New brochures

The Swan River Trust is developing a new suite of brochures, providing information on its range of services.

The first in the series, Development Application Guidelines, is now available online at www.swanrivertrust.wa.gov.au or by contacting the Trust on 9278 0900.

For planning and development queries, email planning@swanrivertrust.wa.gov.au.



The Foreshore Assessment Project will provide valuable information for the development of a sustainable foreshore management strategy.

New project helps map river foreshore

The first phase of a collaborative project that aims to map the condition of the foreshore in the Swan River Trust Management Area is now complete.

Swan River Trust Environment Programs manager Anthony Sutton said the Foreshore Assessment Project provided valuable information for the development of a sustainable foreshore management strategy.

"Trust officers have been collecting baseline information along the foreshore in the Swan River Trust's Management Area to identify the condition of, and threats to, the foreshore," Mr Sutton said.

"A vegetation assessment from Fremantle to Mount Henry Bridge along the Canning River, and to Heirisson Island in the Swan River, is now complete.

"That equates to around 61 kilometres of foreshore that's been assessed.

"This information has helped to assess the extent and condition of foreshore vegetation, define the distribution of invasive weeds and provided an early warning of the presence of newly introduced weeds."

Mr Sutton said the Foreshore Assessment Project also included investigation of erosion and deposition patterns, degrading impacts on shore zone stability and the condition of river-walling and similar structures.

"Another initiative of the project was the establishment of a Swan River Trust herbarium, in collaboration with the Department of Conservation and Land Management, as part of the WA Herbarium's Regional Herbarium Network," he said.

"More than 250 voucher specimens were collected from various sections of the foreshore."

It is hoped the Foreshore Assessment Project will provide on-going information for the Swan River Trust, the Swan Catchment Council, State and local government agencies, environment and community groups, and the public in managing the future of the river.



Midland Brick employee Nigel Salter planting at the Lacey St Main Drain.

New drainage restoration works start

Restoration works have begun at the Lacey St Main Drain, which has been identified as a key contributor to nutrients entering the Canning River.

The works form part of the \$4 million Drainage Nutrient Intervention Program, which aims to reduce the amount of nutrients entering the Swan and Canning rivers through drainage improvement works.

Planting commenced at the Bickley Road drainage basin in the Canning River Catchment in December, with 2,500 native wetland plant species planted by volunteers from Midland Brick, the Department of Environment and the Swan River Trust.

Over time, the site will be transformed into a meandering vegetated living stream with up to 23,000 native wetland and upland plants providing improved habitat and water quality improvement functions.

Works will also include the creation of sedimentation basins to capture particulate material.

The project is a partnership between the Swan River Trust, City of Gosnells, Armadale Gosnells Landcare Group, South East Regional Centre for Urban Landcare, the Department of Environment and the Water Corporation.

Action Plan: The first five years

A summary of the first five years of the implementation of the Swan-Canning Cleanup Program is now available.

The brochure highlights the achievements of the Swan-Canning Cleanup Program.

To view the brochure online, go to www.swanrivertrust.wa.gov.au, or call the Trust on 9278 0900.



Action Plan evaluation

An independent evaluation of the Swan-Canning Cleanup Program Action Plan has commended its achievements and pointed the way forward for the next phase.

Undertaken at the end of the first five years of on-ground action, the evaluation delivered eight recommendations, calling for a more strategic approach with clear goals and objectives.

Of the 44 sub-recommendations of the Action Plan, the evaluation found that 34 had been implemented.

The final evaluation report was tabled in Parliament by former Environment Minister Judy Edwards in November 2005.

Dr Edwards paid tribute to the hundreds of community volunteers and representatives from industry, State and local government who had worked over the past five years to implement the Cleanup Program Action Plan.

"The evaluation report highlights the major achievements of the Swan River Trust's Cleanup Program and identifies the opportunities for strengthening the program in the future," Dr Edwards said.

Copies of the report are available on the Swan River Trust website at www.swanrivertrust.wa.gov.au.

New stage for the Swan-Canning Cleanup Program

Following the achievements of the first stage of the Swan-Canning Cleanup Program, the Swan River Trust is working closely with partners to develop the next Action Plan.

Environmental Programs manager Anthony Sutton said a Working Group is overseeing the development of the draft Cleanup Program Action Plan II due at the end of June 2006, which will address the Cleanup Program Evaluation Report recommendations.

"During the next six months project managers and senior officers will meet to develop the plan and identify areas for consideration. Focus groups will be held to collect stakeholder feedback and review key action areas," he said.

"Key stakeholders from the departments of Environment, Fisheries, Planning and Infrastructure, Water, and Conservation and Land Management will be involved in the development of the Action Plan.

"National and international experts will provide scientific advice and a Technical Advisory Panel will advise focus groups on community capacity, governance and delivery arrangements."

A series of events will be held in 2006 to enable everyone to contribute to developing the next phase of the Cleanup Program.

Evaluation Recommendations

- undertake a whole of government approach to catchment management
- develop a strategic direction and long-term business plan
- improve Cleanup Program leadership
- establish future Cleanup Program goals and objectives
- establish effective partnerships
- secure long-term funding for priority projects
- establish and implement a research and development program
- improve partnerships with State and local planning authorities

