

River View



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Trust responds to algal bloom



The Trust was kept busy during March and April with high levels of the fish-harming algae *Karlodinium micrum* and low oxygen levels in the upper Swan River.



After monitoring high levels of the algae for several weeks, water quality deteriorated in early April resulting in more than 3,000 dead fish and a strong odour between Maylands and Guildford.



The Trust Incident Response Team worked over-time to ensure the affected area was inspected and cleaned, extra water quality testing was carried out, and stakeholders were informed.

Trust general manager Rod Hughes said signs were erected. Information was handed out to people in the affected area, warning people to avoid the water and to contact the Trust if they saw any sluggish or dead fish.

By mid-April, water quality testing showed improved levels of oxygen in the affected area and a decrease in *Karlodinium micrum* levels in mid-April. Levels of the same algae remained high in the lower Canning River.

The weekly algae activity report can be viewed on the Trust website, in the weather section of Saturday's *West Australian* and on Channel 9 TV news on Friday evenings.

(From top) Dead yellowtail grunters near Garratt Road bridge in Bayswater; Department of Environment officer Michael Kelly conducting water quality testing; Trust general manager Rod Hughes talking to the media.

New jetties policy

Five submissions have been received to date on a revised jetties policy that discourages new private jetties but encourages community jetties on the Swan and Canning rivers.

Trust chairman Charlie Welker said public access to the rivers should be upheld and the Trust actively encouraged the use of public jetties.

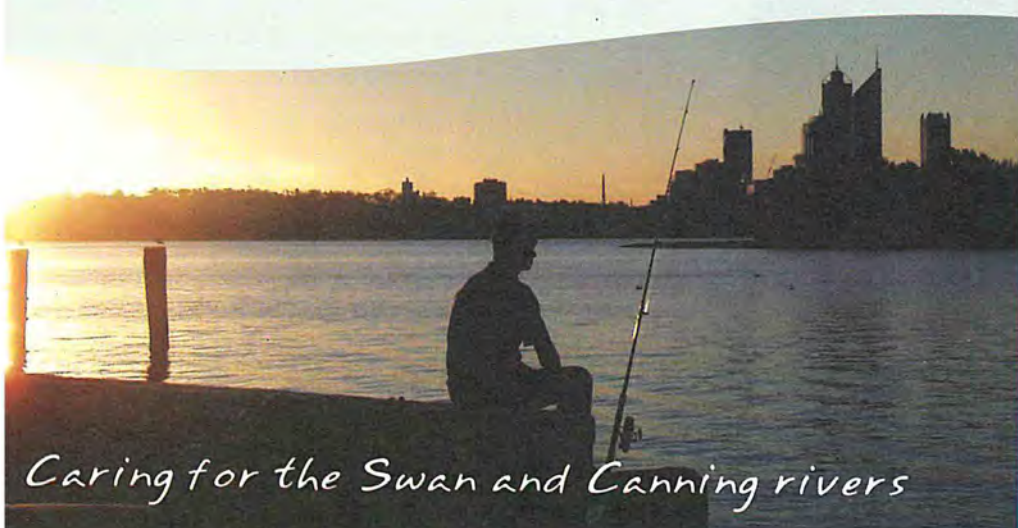
"A good example is the fishing platforms installed with funds from the Trust's *Riverbank* program on the Canning River in Shelley. These platforms provide access while protecting the foreshore," Mr Welker said.

The draft policy also outlines the Trust's position on commercial jetties and how they will be assessed.

Visit the Swan River Trust website www.swanrivertrust.wa.gov.au or the Trust offices during normal business hours to view the policy.

Public comment is requested and submissions should be lodged with the Trust by Tuesday, June 20.

Submissions can be emailed to planning@swanrivertrust.wa.gov.au or posted to the General Manager, Swan River Trust, PO Box 6740, Hay Street East, EAST PERTH WA 6892.



Caring for the Swan and Canning rivers

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Funds available

The Trust has announced \$1 million to support foreshore protection and rehabilitation through the 2006/07 Riverbank funding grants.

Trust environment programs manager Anthony Sutton said expressions of interest were now open to local and State Government agencies working in partnership with the community.

"Through this program, funds are available for these agencies to undertake foreshore protection and rehabilitation projects on public land in the Trust management area," Mr Sutton said.

"The \$1 million will help to tackle issues such as erosion, weed invasion and loss of native vegetation.

"More than \$1.2 million in Riverbank funding has been invested in 46 projects since 2001, including the installation of fishing platforms on the Shelley Rossmoyne foreshore and riverwall repairs at JH Abrahams Reserve in Crawley."

A wide range of foreshore protection and rehabilitation activities in the Trust management area are eligible for funding.

Applications for the 2006/07 financial year funding close on Friday, May 26, 2006.

For more information, visit the Trust's website www.swanrivertrust.wa.gov.au or contact the Trust on (08) 9278 0900.



Department of Environment and Trust officers spray Phoslock™ into the Mills Street Basin.

High tech clay traps nutrients

About 40,000 litres of the modified clay product Phoslock™ have been applied as a slurry to three drainage basins in the Mills Street and Wharf Street Main Drain Catchments.

Phoslock™ has been used in previous years in some drains to remove phosphorus before it reaches the Canning River. It has also been applied directly to the Canning River.

Trust environment programs manager Anthony Sutton said the Mills Street and Wharf Street Main Drain Catchments had been identified as priority catchments.

"By trapping excess nutrients in the stormwater of these main drain catchments, we hope to improve the overall water quality of stormwater entering the Canning River," he said.

"The clay works by binding dissolved phosphorus to the Phoslock™ clay particles, making it unable to support algal growth and effectively eliminating the nutrient's impact on the river.

"The application started in February 2006 and continued until May.

"This project complements other restoration works that the Trust is completing, such as restoration of drainage basins in Cannington, Beckenham and Welshpool."

The project is part of the Swan River Trust's \$4 million Drainage Nutrient Intervention Program, which aims to reduce algal blooms and improve water quality in the Swan and Canning rivers by improving urban drainage systems.

More information about the Drainage Nutrient Intervention Program is available on the Trust's website www.swanrivertrust.wa.gov.au.

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.

The Drainage Nutrient Intervention Program brochure will soon be available.



Managing stormwater



Re-occurring and escalating algal blooms and fish kills in south-west waterways have resulted in an increased focus on stormwater management in Western Australia.

The Trust and the Department of Environment have been working together to develop a Stormwater Management Manual for the State.

Stand-alone chapters in the manual allow for easy reference, handling and updating, and are released on the Department of Environment's website as completed.

The Manual provides higher level policies and planning principles, as well as practical on-ground best practice advice.

The latest chapter to be released is on retrofitting, which is the process of fixing up stormwater management problems in existing developed areas to meet a range of objectives including improving water quality.

It has been written primarily for local and State Government agencies, business, developers and community groups involved in stormwater management systems.

Copies of the published chapters of the Stormwater Management Manual for Western Australia can be downloaded from the Department of Environment website <http://stormwater.environment.wa.gov.au> under 'Publications', then 'Guidelines'.

New legislation passes lower house

New legislation aiming to safeguard the rivers passed by the Legislative Assembly on April 6 is now due for further consideration in the Legislative Council.

The Swan and Canning Rivers Management Bill was introduced to State Parliament in November last year and has been generally supported by both major parties in the Legislative Assembly.

Throughout debate in the lower house the Bill, developed by the Swan River Trust, was recognised as an appropriate way to deal with the issues facing the rivers.

Passage of 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.

For more information on the legislation, visit the Trust's website www.swanrivertrust.wa.gov.au or call (08) 9278 0900.

Trust warns against illegal developments

In response to concerns about unauthorised developments along the river, the Trust has engaged riverfront residents in an education campaign.

Residents whose properties abut the Swan and Canning rivers or public lands in the Parks and Recreation Reserve have been sent information about development requirements.

Trust general manager Rod Hughes said the Trust was also concerned about foreshore vegetation being cut back or removed by residents trying to improve their views.

"We have tried to inform riverside residents about the importance of foreshore vegetation and the role it plays in stabilising the shoreline and providing habitat," Mr Hughes said.

"Riverfront residents have the right to enjoy their properties but are not entitled to treat public land as if it is private.

"Retaining walls, fences, gardens and other structures need to be wholly contained in the private landholding and should not encroach on the public reserve.

"The Trust regards the rivers as the 'people's park' to be enjoyed by the whole community."

The community is encouraged to report any activities which may be harmful to the rivers and shorelines by contacting the Trust on 9278 0900 during business hours or after hours on 0419 192 845.



Damaged vegetation at Majestic Point, Applecross.





Swan-Canning Cleanup Program update

Several upcoming events will play an important role in the development of the second Swan-Canning Cleanup Program Action Plan.

The Swan River Trust is hosting a series of Focus Groups in May. Each group is involved in developing recommendations for an action area of the SCCP II Action Plan.

A River Science Workshop will be held on May 17-18, 2006, and will include a closed session to look at proposed recommendations for the SCCP II Action Plan.

Local, national and international scientific experts will review the scientific understanding and current monitoring and reporting program for the Swan-Canning river system.

The community will also have a chance to engage with these experts at an open Community Forum evening on Thursday, May 18 at University Hall, University of Western Australia, from 7.00 to 9.30pm.

The workshop is being organised by the Department of Environment, with financial support from the Swan Catchment Council and the Swan River Trust.

A Stakeholder Forum is planned for mid-June 2006. This forum will provide stakeholders with an update on development of the Action Plan and an opportunity for input.



Planting season starts

With the approach of winter and the planting season, the Trust is calling for corporate volunteers to take part in its Corporate Care Day Program.

Many people are surprised to learn that the place to start cleaning up the river is on the land.

The Corporate Care Day Program provides businesses with a team-building experience where staff can work away from the office. Participants learn about the environment while helping catchment groups achieve important environmental outcomes.

Activities are seasonal and site dependent and may include planting, weeding, the construction of access tracks, boardwalks or fences, or rubbish removal.

For further information or to find out how your business can participate in a Corporate Care Day, please contact the Trust on (08) 9278 0900 or email info@swanrivertrust.wa.gov.au.



PriceWaterhouseCoopers employees working to improve the health of the rivers.

Understanding soils and alpacas

Two workshops on alpacas, soils and fertilisers were held as part of the Swan-Canning Cleanup Program's Property Planning Project in March.

Alpaca Association members Judy and Murray Stannard of Encantador Alpaca's offered their well-managed small landholding as a venue for the Alpaca Ownership workshop.

Participants learnt how to undertake annual soil testing for fertiliser requirements, and manage grazing and stocking rates to ensure year-round pasture cover.

At the Understanding Soils and Fertilisers for Pastures workshop, guest speakers spoke about Acid Sulfate Soils, the Swan Catchment and environmentally safe fertilisers.

The workshop covered what soil consists of, how it works and how its nutrient loss affects the Swan-Canning Catchment.

Participants who had not previously undertaken soil testing advised organisers they would now do so to get better pasture growth and prevent nutrient runoff from their property.

Left: A baby alpaca shorn during the Alpaca Ownership workshop.



Workshop participants discuss a foreshore management plan.

Foreshore complexities unraveled

A workshop held in March provided environmental officers, planners, engineers and other local government officers with technical knowledge, skills and tools to best manage foreshore areas.

Trust environment programs manager Anthony Sutton said the management of river foreshores was an important role for local governments in the Swan-Canning Catchment.

"Foreshore management is a complex issue, vital to maintaining and improving the water quality and biodiversity of our river systems," Mr Sutton said.

"Attendees came away with more information about the Swan-Canning river system, planning approvals, foreshore assessment, management tools and consultation processes.

"Site issues such as Acid Sulfate Soils, techniques in design and restoration, and monitoring and evaluation of work were also covered."

The workshop was organised by the Swan Catchment Centre and the Eastern Metropolitan Regional Council and was the first in the SCC's Local Government Training Program.

The workshop was supported by the Trust's Swan-Canning Cleanup Program and the Natural Heritage Trust delivered by the Swan Catchment Council.

Other Local Government Training planned for this year includes Acid Sulfate Soils, Sustainable Landscaping, Stormwater Management and Aboriginal Consultation.

what's on

June

- 5 World Environment Day
- 15-17 Landcare Education Field Study Courses contact Landcare Education Officer Patricia Dames on 9690 2250 or pdames@agric.wa.gov.au

July

- 6-7 Landcare Education Field Study Courses – see above for contact details
- 23-29 National Chemistry Week
- 30 National Tree Day

August

- 13-21 National Science Week

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

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Yacht club development



The Swan River Trust has recommended against a proposed expansion of a yacht club marina, which would see more than a hectare of Matilda Bay in Crawley taken over by new boat pens.

Trust statutory assessments manager Paul Stephens said the renewal of Royal Perth

Yacht Club's (RPYC) dilapidated jetties was supported, however the 24 per cent expansion of the club's riverbed lease did not provide sufficient public benefit to outweigh the alienation of the river.

"The river is a community asset and must be carefully managed to ensure it is not slowly handed over to private interests," Mr Stephens said.

"The proposed increase is significant. By comparison, under law, a proposal to reclaim a hectare of riverbed would require approval by the State Parliament."

Mr Stephens said the Trust supported the Club's proposals to upgrade environmental management of the site and the replacement of dilapidated jetties.

54 submissions were received during the public comment period, and the application is now with the Environmental Appeals Convenor for review.

Above: An aerial view of Royal Perth Yacht Club in Matilda Bay, courtesy of the Department of Environment.

Drainage program heats up

A new drainage restoration project at the Manley Street Basin in Cannington aims to reduce nutrients discharging into the Canning River.

The drain has been identified as a nutrient 'hot spot', with nitrogen and phosphorus levels at times reaching more than double their target according to water quality monitoring results.

Proposed works include reshaping the basin and vegetating a small section on the perimeter with low local native wetland plants.

A community meeting held on site in late March was chaired by City of Canning Deputy Mayor Joe Delle Donne, and gave project partners the opportunity to consult with the community and gain feedback on the project proposal.

The project is part of the Trust's Drainage Nutrient Intervention Program and complements other drainage restoration works undertaken throughout the Canning Plain Catchment.

It is being undertaken in consultation with the City of Canning, South East Regional Centre for Urban Landcare and the Water Corporation.

Manley Street Compensating Basin, Cannington.



Above: Trust business manager Michelle Andrews and senior NRM officer Kelly Exell with general manager Rod Hughes signing the MoU.

Trust supports Indigenous traineeships

An Indigenous Traineeship Program will soon be in place at the Swan River Trust as part of a long-term indigenous employment strategy.

Trust business manager Michelle Andrews said the Trust approached the Department of Environment (DoE) and Department of Water (DoW) to be part of the program. It will enable indigenous Australians of all ages to undertake accredited training and gain workplace experience in the environment sector.

A Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) has been signed with the DoE to develop and implement the Traineeship Program across the three agencies.

Long-term employment opportunities will be identified in each agency to ensure an ongoing commitment to indigenous employment.

The objectives of the Traineeship Program are to:

- increase the long-term employment of indigenous Australians in the Trust, DoE and DoW;
- improve critical linkages between the agencies and the indigenous communities for long-term protection of the State's natural resources;
- increase the capacity for indigenous communities to be involved in water and environmental issues in Western Australia; and
- incorporate the program into the DoE and DoW Indigenous Employment Strategy currently under development.

External stakeholders are contributing to the development of the program including the Aboriginal Lands Trust, Department of Education and Training, Department of Indigenous Affairs, PEEDAC Pty Ltd and the Swan Catchment Council.

PEEDAC administers the Community Development Employment Program in the Perth region.

Trust and local government safeguard rivers

The Trust's Riverplan program aims to complete assessments of the contribution made by local governments to protecting the rivers in the next 12 months.

Trust strategic programs manager Darryl Miller said that the Trust was working with local governments to evaluate current activities and identify opportunities for future action and partnerships.

"The Trust has worked with the Cities of South Perth, Armadale, Swan and Melville so far to pilot a process for Riverplan assessments, with the first assessment completed in September last year," Mr Miller said.

"Completed assessments for South Perth and Armadale have resulted in a joint statement of intent between the Trust and these local governments to work together on strategies to safeguard the rivers.

"Most recently, the City of Armadale's commitment to the river was set out in its State of the Environment Action Plan, reflected in policy and land use planning and implemented through on-ground works:

"A good example of how the City has recognised the importance of the river and is taking action to protect it is its multi-faceted approach to foreshore management."

Mr Miller commended the City for recognising the importance of catchment management to prevent nutrients from leaching into the river.

"The City has a good history of working with the Trust in areas such as river restoration. This relationship has been strengthened through the statement of intent," he said.

The next local governments planned for assessment include the Cities of Bayswater, Canning and Perth.

Speeding skippers targeted

Speeding boat owners were targeted in a joint operation designed to increase safety and reduce damage to foreshore vegetation on the Swan and Canning rivers.

The initiative, named 'No Wash No Wake', involved officers from the Department for Planning and Infrastructure and the Swan River Trust working side by side to educate the owners of speeding vessels.

More than 50 vessels were stopped during the patrols in February and March, with five infringements and two cautions handed down.

Boating Guides, which include information about how to be a river-friendly boat user, were distributed to skippers, along with Recreational Skippers Tickets workbooks.

Trust waterways manager Denis Doak said the patrols had reinforced the message that speeding on the river was unsafe and a hazard to the environment.

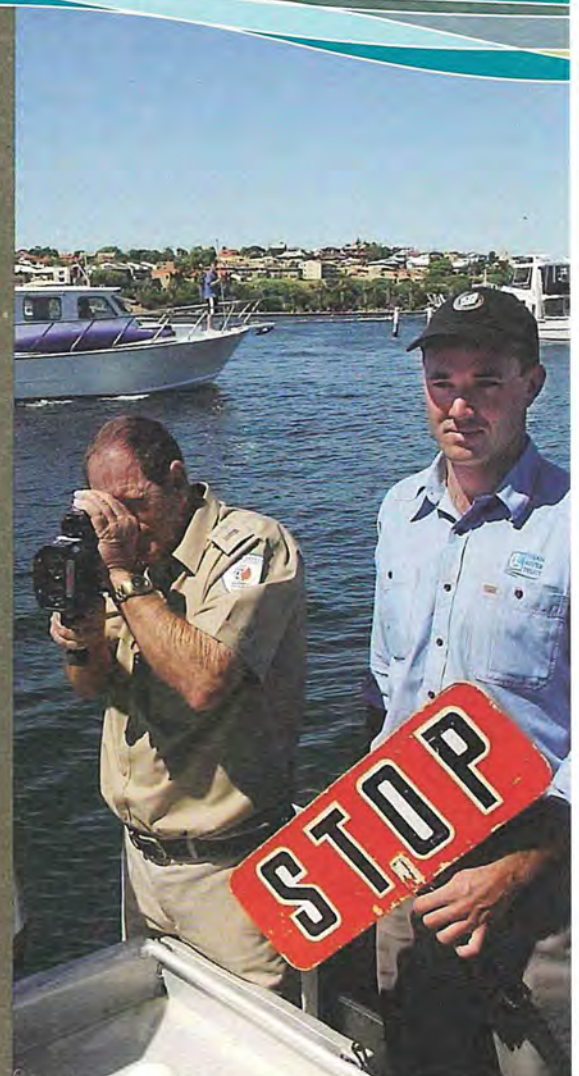
"Our goal was to educate boat owners about safety issues caused by excessive speed on the water and highlight the environmental impacts of boatwash," Mr Doak said.

"Shorelines and their vegetation are fragile and easily damaged by natural and human impacts, including boatwash.

"Well-vegetated shorelines are essential in maintaining foreshore stability, wildlife habitat, and preventing nutrients and sediments from reaching the waterways."

The Trust encourages the community to report any activity which may be harmful to the rivers or shorelines by calling the office on 9278 0900 or after hours on 0419 192 845.

Officers Norm Snashall and Dale Stanton on the Swan River at East Fremantle. Photo reproduced courtesy of the West Australian.



Thousands attend Expo

Thousands of people visited the Trust's marquee hosting the Swan-Canning Cleanup Program Community Expo at the Autumn River Festival on Sunday, April 2.

Trust communications manager Wendy Yorke said people were invited to have their say on river issues with staff and project partners at the Expo, which showcased how the Cleanup Program is working to improve river health.

"Main issues raised included the health of the rivers and the quality of the water. Many people were interested in learning how they could help keep the rivers healthy," Mrs Yorke said.

Environment Minister Mark McGowan and Trust chairman Charlie Welker spoke to key stakeholders about water quality issues in the Swan and Canning rivers, following the official launch of the festival.

Features of the Expo included interactive displays and free demonstrations from award-winning Great Gardens presenters on practical, river friendly gardening practices.

It was the first time the Expo had been held at Riverside Gardens in Bayswater as part of the Autumn River Festival, which attracts more than 10,000 visitors each year.

The Expo also provided a vital opportunity for the Cleanup Program to report its progress to the community and engage stakeholders in the implementation of the new Action Plan.

The Cleanup Program works to reduce the occurrence and severity of algal blooms by reducing the amount of nutrients such as nitrogen and phosphorus entering the river system.

After its first five years of action, an independent review commended the achievements of the Cleanup Program.

The Trust is now working closely with partners to develop the next Action Plan. A draft plan will be completed by mid-2006 and will address the recommendations of the review.



(From left to right) Environment Minister Mark McGowan, Trust chairman Charlie Welker and Great Gardens presenter Chris Ferreira at the Expo. Above right: Department of Environment officers Laurence Radin and Cassandra Bryan demonstrate a river model.



Help keep our rivers healthy