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Department of Biodiversity,
Conservation and Attractions

Forest Management Plan 2024-2033

FMP News, Birak edition

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Ben Sawyer

FMP Coordinator

G'day Nicole

We're now one year into delivering the Forest Management Plan 2024-2033 (FMP) and the foundations we've established over the past twelve months will provide for the continued implementation of the FMP over the next nine years. For more information, the FMP Implementation Action Plan and Forest Health Monitoring Program Implementation Plan are now published on the [FMP website](#).

The ecological thinning program commenced last year following a significant forest die-off event that resulted from the prolonged dry of the 2023/24 summer. Planning for the 2025 ecological thinning program is underway with the plan now available on the [FMP website](#). The plan was circulated for comment to Noongar regional corporations, the Department of Water and Environmental Regulation, the Water Corporation, mining companies, conservation groups, and forest-based industries and businesses.

Internally we've commenced processes within the Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions (DBCA) to add at least 400,000 hectares to the conservation reserve system by 2033. The additional reserves support the FMP goal to conserve biodiversity and ecosystem resilience. Consultation with our Noongar partners and stakeholders is expected to commence later this year for initial reserve proposals.

A Ministerial condition for the FMP to establish a scientific research program into prescribed burning, with the aim of investigating measurable impacts on forest ecosystems and biodiversity from bushfires and fire management strategies, also started last year. Known as the Fire Research Collaboration Project, the first stage has been the formulation of the research question/s in consultation with a diverse group of academics. More about this project will be shared in the coming months.

Finally, I had an opportunity to attend the 2024 Forestry Symposium (in Victoria) which was an excellent opportunity to

hear from leaders around the world about forest management best practice. The 2024 theme was *Healthy and Resilient Forests for our Future*. The keynote speaker, Professor Lori Daniels, from the Department of Forest and Conservation Services in Canada, presented on nurturing healthy and resilient forests in response to the devastating wildfires of their 2024 summer and in preparation for their forecasts for climate change. It was also great to hear from Professor Patrick Baker from the University of Melbourne, who shared research on stand density management for ecological outcomes as well as a range of other speakers on topics including the connection of forests and people, and technologies in contemporary forest management.

I'm grateful to those stakeholders who have provided input to delivering Year One of the FMP. I look forward to sharing our progression towards improving the health of our south-west forests. Happy New Year!

Regards



FMP maps win the Technical Excellence Award

The Cartographic Services Unit at DBCA were pivotal in creating the maps for the FMP. The team developed thirteen A4 maps and three A0-sized maps, ensuring exceptional accuracy and visual clarity of spatial data related to forest resources across the FMP area.

To achieve this, the team utilised Avenza MAPublisher, which seamlessly integrates with Adobe Illustrator to produce precise, data-driven maps that are both informative and visually appealing. MAPublisher's compatibility with various geospatial data formats ensured a seamless integration with existing geographic information systems used for forest themes. This was the first time DBCA has used this software and by automating workflows such as labelling and symbolisation, the software improved efficiency, reduced errors, and simplified the mapping of complex forestry data. The FMP mapping component was led by Chris Schroder, DBCA's Cartographic Services Unit Lead Cartographer.

We are happy to share that the FMP maps won the award for Technical Excellence at the 2024 Western Australian Geospatial Council Awards. The judges from the Geospatial Council applauded the exceptional detail captured in the maps with critical themes such as Aboriginal Language Groups, Dieback Occurrence and Proposed Land Categories. This success has positioned DBCA's Cartographic Services Unit as a finalist in the prestigious Oceanic Awards, to be announced at the Locate Conference in Brisbane later this year.



Above: DBCA's Cartographic Services Unit win the Western Australian Geospatial Council Technical Excellence Award.

Munro Ecological Thinning Demonstration Site officially opens

During the development process of the FMP, an independent expert panel was engaged by DBCA to provide advice on the need and possible approaches to ecological thinning in our south-west forests. The report from the panel provided valuable background information and helped to frame DBCA's proposed approach to ecological thinning as outlined in the FMP. The approach has also been informed by the preliminary work undertaken by a combined agency, community and industry working group (in

2019) through the [Djarlma Plan](#) to establish ecological thinning research and demonstration areas in the south-west forests.

The Munro Ecological Thinning Demonstration Site in Kirup, Western Australia has been in development since 2019 and was officially opened to the public on 10 December 2024. The site features five distinct areas within the forest with the first being a cell of mature forest structure to compare to the other four areas of regrowth forest where different ecological thinning techniques have been applied. Interpretative signage explains the different thinning methods with the knowledge and insight of Traditional Owners provided through engagement with Noongar representatives from Gnaala Karla Booja.

To learn more about ecological thinning and its benefits check out this video featuring our DBCA scientists.



Above: 'Boorn to survive: supporting the south-west forests' video explaining ecological thinning.

Are you curious about water? Join us to locate water sources in the south-west

The FMP team have recently begun collaborating with local universities to develop a citizen science program that can bolster scientific research efforts in relation to water sources and catchments within the FMP area.

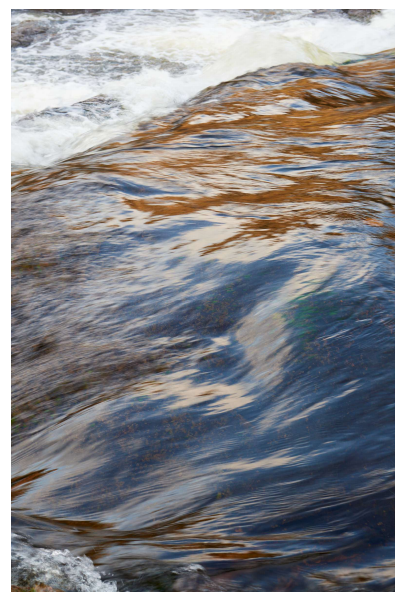
Waterways, foreshore areas and wetlands play an important role in the conservation of biodiversity, forest health and ecological function. Variation in topography, geology, soils and climate have shaped a

wide array of aquatic habitats in the FMP planning area. There are thousands of individual wetlands and more than 6,000km of perennial rivers in the south-west region. The major rivers include the Moore, Swan, Murray, Collie, Blackwood, Donnelly, Warren, Frankland, Shannon, Denmark, Deep, Kent, Margaret, Canning and Hay Rivers. There is also an estimated 41,300km of creeks constituting a significant proportion of the total stream zone length. The conservation of water is closely linked to the conservation of biodiversity, Noongar cultural heritage, and sustaining the ecological capacity and health of forest ecosystems.

The citizen science program currently being developed will assist DBCA scientists to monitor these water sources more closely in relation to our drying climate. Importantly, DBCA is seeking to build a citizen science program that will foster a sense of community and drive environmental stewardship in our south-west communities. We're aiming to kickstart the program this year.

If this is something you would like to be involved in, we're keen to hear from you by simply completing the [expression of interest form](#).

We'll continue to share more about this citizen science project as it develops.



Images: Waterways in the south-west (Photographer: Frances Andrijich / Copyright: DBCA).

We're now in the season of Birak!

Birak is the first month of the Noongar seasonal calendar and runs from December to January. During Birak the rain eases and gives way to drier and warmer weather. It's known as the season of the young as it's a time of year when fledglings are venturing out of their nests (you may have heard the baby

magpies in your neighbourhood). Another noticeable change is in the winds which are now coming from the east in the morning and a sea breeze, if we're lucky, in the afternoon.

Cover image: Western Australian Christmas tree (*Nuytsia floribunda*), Cape Le Grand (Credit: Tourism Western Australia).

DBCA acknowledges the Noongar people as the Traditional Owners within the Forest Management Plan area in the south-west of Western Australia and respects the continuing connection and importance of forests to their cultural, physical and spiritual health.



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