

REFLECTIONS ON THE 2019 PRESCRIBED BURNING CONFERENCE

The first theme of the two day Prescribed Burning Conference held 31 July- 1 August at UWA was **Indigenous Fire Management - history and current practice**, with five speakers. Keynote speaker Oral McGuire, Whadjuk/Ballardong Nyungar from Beverley, spoke on Indigenous fire practices. He said *'our country is sick, and therefore so are we.'* He spent 18 years as a fire fighter with the Rural Fire Authority, then FESA, now DFES. A lot of time was spent clearing up after CALM's prescribed burns got out of control. He emphasised their indigenous land management practices are being ignored and nothing is being done *with* indigenous people. Big prescribed burns as done now are no good for anyone.



Photo by M Owen

In Spring 2018, 6 hectares of Landsdale bushland were burnt as part of prescribed burning program by the City of Wanneroo. This Spring, the City is planning to burn another 3.6 hectares in the same reserve and use the same technique in 15 other reserves, some smaller than 2 hectares. This is despite unplanned fire affecting part of this 16 ha Banksia woodland threatened ecological community in 2015.

There are no indigenous protected areas where indigenous practices are used based on their cultural values and cultural authority. Oral explained that they burnt only small bits of country and only in winter, and it was labour intensive. *'We have to get country in balance and Nyungars need to help and be engaged so that the right people who know the land in detail are doing the cool burns'*.

The second presenter, Lynette Knapp said that *today's prescribed burns are an atrocity, a 'cremation' of everything being burnt out, this is wrong.* She also reiterated that there is currently no Nyungar participation in prescribed burns. They only burnt very small patches, and there were no mass hot burns at all.

Next, Gareth Catt spoke on altered fire regimes in Australian deserts. Time scales in deserts are very different from that in other areas. Traditional fire practices were done in the rain on very small patches only.

Large hot fires wipe out the canopy, everything becomes bare and mammals, skinks etc killed. Marla are now extinct in the wild.

Sven Ottoman explained that all landscapes are cultural and have artefacts that need to be managed. Working *with* Aboriginal Rangers in their country is essential.

Leslie Schultz gave 'a wake-up call' to the Shire of Dundas: from fire we are heading towards extinction of animals, birds, reptiles. The Dundas Rural Bush Fire Brigade is the only indigenous Bush-fire Brigade. But DFES, DBCA, and the Shire of Dundas are not working together with the Ngadju Aboriginal people and title holders. They are still not included in land management. Hot fires

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Editorial

Recent international publicity condemning the huge areas of clearing and burning of the Amazon Rainforest in Brazil highlighted the very significant loss of oxygen production from this destruction. We humans are dependent on oxygen production from plants every minute of every day. Pressure from the UN and various nations resulted in extensive aerial fire fighting to attempt to extinguish these fires and to stop clearing.

This publicity highlights similar issues here for our WA woodlands and forests. Where is the consideration of both the loss of oxygen production and the loss of the carbon sink, and the increased Greenhouse Gas emissions in WA's continued clearing and extensive burning?

The recent two day Prescribed Burning Conference held at UWA gave scientific focus and many consistent criticisms of current prescribed burning practices in WA. Indigenous practices and involvement are not being used across the State. The impact on biodiversity values from excessive regular burns are not being properly considered. It is the long unburnt forests and woodlands which have the lowest fire fuel loads and the highest fauna and flora populations. The statement was presented: '*Scientists call for abandonment of the fixed target of 200,000 ha per year to be prescribed burned in the SW.*'

The UBC maintains its position of 'no prescribed burning on the Swan Coastal Plain'. Burns increase grassy weed growth and thus increase fire hazard. Fauna and pollinators are killed and re-colonisation from refugia may be difficult or impossible in the now highly fragmented bushland landscape. The focus should be on arson prevention, grassy weed control and fast attack in the event of summer fire.

The EPA is currently reviewing its policy on consideration of Greenhouse Gas emissions in its assessments. The issue of excessive emissions from burning and clearing needs focus. We do need a moratorium on clearing our over-cleared south west biodiversity hotspot and the wheatbelt. On the Swan Coastal Plain the remaining native vegetation is nearly all listed as threatened ecological communities and is habitat for rare species. WA needs a net *increase* in vegetation cover and urban canopy.

On Friday 28th June, the UBC was advised that the Minister for the Environment the Hon Sussan Ley MP accepted the advice of the Independent Scientific Committee to list the Tuart Woodlands and Forests of the Swan Coastal Plain as a *critically endangered* ecological community under the EPBC Act. This listing strengthens our call for a moratorium on clearing and burning on the Swan Coastal Plain. UBC folk are encouraged to study and promote use of the Approved Conservation Advice for the Tuart Woodlands which is available on the Department of Environment's website. See page 3.

UBC's ongoing discussions with government agencies and Minister Dawson have not seen progress in the much needed outcomes of completing Bush Forever implementation and Regional Parks recommendations. (See page 5). Allocation of new recurrent funding to DBCA to manage the set of Bush Forever sites proposed to be transferred for their management was not included in the 2019 state budget.

Representatives from the Friends of Pt Peron, Wetlands Research Association, and UBC met with Mike Rowe, Director General of DWER, and his senior staff concerning the Water Corporation's proposal for construction of a wastewater pipeline (SDOOL2) through Pt Peron and adjacent to the internationally significant Lake Richmond with its *critically endangered thrombolites*. It is both unbelievable and unacceptable that the expert hydrogeological advice presented by Dr Vic Semeniuk was not used to refuse the Clearing Permit application for this proposal because of the risk of destruction of the unique thrombolite assemblage. DWER has advised approval of the Clearing Permit.

UBC encourages Members and Supporters to meet with your local MPs and insist on their action to address these matters without further delay. On page 10 is a toolkit to help in capturing their hearts and minds to inspire action.

There is at least one positive step with the WAPC commencing the purchase of the last two lots of the Anstey Keane Damp-lands (see textbox below) Restoration of these sites is expected to be completed by the end of 2019.



Photo by K Sarti

From right: Nina McLaren, Friends of Trigg Bushland, Bronwen and Greg Keighery at the UBC General Meeting held on 14 August 2019, celebrating the recognition of Tuart woodlands as being of national conservation value, following its listing under the Environmental Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999.

Bush Forever Progress

Three properties comprising 14.9ha were purchased in 2018/19 at a cost of \$2.95 million for Bush Forever in sites 253 and 387. The purchase at Site 253 completed land acquisitions for this site (Harrisdale Swamp). This brings the total funds expended on Bush Forever sites reserved under MRS Amendment 1082/33 (Bush Forever and Related Lands) and additional Planning Control Areas to 2,071ha at a cost of \$156.85 million.

There are 18 properties still to be acquired which were reserved under the Bush Forever MRS Amendment 1082/33, including the two Anstey-Keane lots currently in negotiations with the owner. Of those 18 remaining properties it is expected five will be acquired this financial year.

Our Tuart Woodlands are Critically Endangered

They were listed by the Federal Government under the *EPBC Act* in July 2019

By Sue Conlan

In less than 200 years of European settlement our tallest eucalypts on the coast in a 400km narrow strip around Perth are critically endangered.

It is time we accept Perth is located in a biodiversity hotspot within a biodiversity hot spot (SW WA) and plan accordingly.

Or do we have [the plans](#) and don't follow them?

Tuarts, *Eucalyptus gomphocephala*, helmet heads named because of their flower bud shape were the first tall forests encountered by Europeans. They used the Bunbury Ludlow Tuart forest to practice forestry. Unfortunately, Tuarts don't grow very far inland preferring the Quindalup and Spearwood dune system. They soon ran out of Tuarts to chop down. Although Tuarts are quite different to other gums they will hybridize with Yates where the growing ranges meet.

Have you noticed the character of some of the big old Tuarts? The Noongars saw them as old friends. When the Noongar Aboriginals came back to the coast in the summer these old friends would greet them for another season usually letting them know what good tucker was about. Imagine how they felt when the white men started chopping down their old friends.

Over the years we have also developed a love of these big trees defining our home landscape. We want to see them when we go for walks, driving the car! Their presence is a sign that we are caring for the environment. Tuarts keep our environment healthy by providing habitat for all sorts of wildlife, giving us oxygen to breathe, stopping our riverbanks from eroding, filtering nutrients before reaching our river, moderating the climate.



Photo courtesy Friends of Mosman Park Bushland

The Humane Society were so concerned that they made the submission for protection by producing evidence that Tuarts and their woodlands are critically endangered. The evidence from our expert scientists' years of mapping made it clear in November 2017 they were endangered. Oddly it was not until after a federal election a year and a half later that the Federal Minister for the Environment announced the listing, saying it was a hard decision.

Tuart woodlands are found right where we want to live. They especially like following water courses as they can withstand some salinity. This is definitely bad news if you want a water view although a few will agree the view is enhanced by a Tuart growing in front.

Just like friends, Tuarts like the company they keep. There are six major vegetation types, seven vegetation complexes and 13 floristic community types.

Our scientists have gone to great lengths to prove that the greater supporting diversity of plants and animals around Tuarts the happier they are. Taking away their friends and replacing with watered fertilised lawn with cars parked underneath is probably about the worst thing you can do to a Tuart. Mountain bikes tracks are not recommended either. See Tuart Woodland conservation advice [document](#).

The minimum Tuart woodland patch can be as little as 0.5ha if it fits the conditions. A Tuart woodland of 2ha without understorey can also fit the [conservation criteria](#). At Bunbury where the Tuart forests were first logged, the understorey came back with more peppermint trees and less banksias. Much understorey did not come back after heavy grazing.

A significant threat to Tuarts are too frequent fires. Tuart seed germinates well but if a fire occurs too long before rain, seed may not last until winter rain. Tuarts need at least 10 years between fires to produce sufficient viable seed and to resist fire. A delay in extinguishing a fire will result in old trees burning too deeply to recover. Prescribed burning on the Swan Coastal Plain is detrimental for the bushland often resulting in more grassy weeds which are their very threat.



Photo courtesy Friends of Mosman Park Bushland

(Continued on page 4)

We do love living where Tuarts grow so there is no recovery plan but recommendations have been made to protect patches of Tuart woodlands by having 30m buffers of native vegetation around them. Makes sense! But if you want to protect your patch you need to know page 26 of the conservation advice to inform your local councillors who will not have the time and perhaps the interest to read it. Your patch may not even be recorded in the [Tuart Atlas](#). Friends of Trigg Bushland were told that aerial mapping did not find any Tuarts in their bushland. When they surveyed their bush by foot they found over 600. Nothing beats a walk through survey. The cost of this is prohibitive for authorities and is a possibility for Friends groups.

[Tuart mapping](#) was undertaken in 2002 and has not been updated since. This mapping was mainly from aerial photography.

Tuarts support a host of wildlife such as, black cockatoos, large birds of prey, small birds, quenda, possums, red tail phascogales and many insects. Out of balance and Tuarts can suffer borer attack and honey fungus.

If your Tuarts are not looking healthy could it be stress caused from decreasing rainfall, dropping water tables or salt water incursions of water tables?

A fence especially for small patches of bushland is the only way to keep wildlife there. Wildlife do not know you and your dog's intent when visiting. Our bushland should be a safe haven for wildlife, too much disturbance and they are off.

Some councils are already removing lawns and planting understory under their local gum trees with great effect.

Shy wildlife need a minimum of 2 ha of non disturbance. Uncontrolled access to bushland also causes trampling of vegetation, weed incursion, spread of soil pathogens and erosion. If you want to see what's in the bushland join in with your local bushcare group for some weeding.

Next time you see a Tuart, take a good look as it's features are a history of it's life, and then pay your respects for the service it provides you!



Photo courtesy Friends of Mosman Park Bushland

Old Weeds need Young People

By Sue Conlan

100 pairs of young hands making short work of old weeds at CY O'Connor beach in August 2019. The request for an Inter Uni Environmental Challenge where our five local universities could muster up 20 students each to meet each other for an environmental cause was too good to refuse.

We soon found out that students from each university would enthusiastically embrace the challenge giving organisers hope for a bright future for our natural areas.

It wasn't hard to find a place where that many helpers would not harm the environment they were trying to help. Our beaches came first to mind. Coogee Beach although a lovely beach in Cockburn Sound had a long history of disturbance. The fragile beach dunes had been denuded with the working abattoir loading and unloading livestock and meat. The track from the abattoir to the water was even pointing inline with the SW wind that blows most of the year.

Not only was this day a collaboration of universities getting together to achieve a tangible outcome of weed removal, an awareness for these young minds of the plight of our natural areas but a collaboration of organisations that care for these places. Perth NRM Coastcare team, City of Cockburn and UBC organised a fun packed morning where everyone could be proud to participate. The students would surely consider the environment in what ever field of study they pursue when they were lead by such a smart, passionate team.

All of our universities in Perth have volunteer hubs. If you would like some extra hands in your bushland why not contact your closest university and let them know what events you have planned. Students volunteering for environmental causes is very highly regarded on their resumes.



Photo by S Conlan

Students, participating in the Inter Uni Environmental Challenge, meticulously weeding rose pelargonium, beach onion and Euphorbia paralias behind the foredune of the Coogee foreshore.

Urban Conservation; A Time for Action

Phil Jennings
Wetlands Conservation Society

We are gradually beginning to understand that we live in the heart of one of the world's top biodiversity hotspots. These are areas of enormous biodiversity, which are now facing unprecedented threats from human activities. The Perth Metropolitan Area and the Peel Region are part of the South West Australia hotspot and they are home to a large number of Threatened Ecological Communities and Declared Rare Flora and Fauna. This has been known to biologists for at least the past 50 years, but they have had limited success in convincing Government to take the necessary action to conserve important parts of our biological heritage. We are fortunate that Charles Gardner, the former Chief Botanist for WA, succeeded in convincing the Government to set aside the Fitzgerald River National Park and the Stirling Ranges because of their enormous biodiversity. He also recommended that the Lesueur area should become a national park, but it took many decades of campaigning by conservation groups to save that precious area from the coal miners.

The EPA recognised that the Swan Coastal Plain had international ecological significance and it set up the System Six Study in the 1970s to identify a comprehensive, representative reserve system. This led to the System Six Red Book (1983) which recommended a large number of Government land holdings should be converted to class A reserves and Regional Parks. The Regional Park concept was invented by the WA EPA and published in the System Six Red Book. This report recommended a system of Regional Parks be established to provide for conservation, recreation and landscape protection. It also recommended that many other small parcels of government land should be protected because of their conservation values. This was the forerunner of Bush Forever.

Although the Labor Government endorsed the System Six Report in 1984, there was very little progress towards implementing it and gradually important parts of it were eroded by opportunistic developers. It was the Court Government in 1997 that took the first steps to implement the Regional Park concept by setting up a system of 8 Regional Parks in the Metropolitan Area along the lines recommended by the EPA in 1984. They also provided funding to manage them and established a Regional

Parks Unit in the Department of Conservation and Land Management (CALM).

Over the past 22 years this Unit has managed to work constructively with the community and local government to establish and maintain an outstanding Regional Parks system. However, this was only meant to be the first step in implementing the EPA's recommendations for Regional Parks. There were several more Regional Parks recommended, including the Lower Serpentine River Valley, the Gnangara Wetlands and the Upper Swan and Helena River Valleys and these have not been progressed so far. Also a proposal has recently been submitted to government to establish a Yule Brook Regional Park, encompassing the Brixton Street Wetlands, Alison Baird Reserve and Yule Brook. In addition the EPA proposed a Peel Regional Park to include a number of small reserves bordering the Peel Inlet and Harvey Estuary. This Regional Park has been planned since 1993 but so far has not been established.

The State Government recently announced an ambitious [Plan For Our Parks](#), to convert a large number of regional land holdings into national parks or nature reserves. Unfortunately, there was very little commitment to the biodiversity hotspots on the Swan Coastal Plain. The proposed new Regional Parks and Bush Forever were not mentioned, although they are under immediate threats from fires, weeds, feral animals and opportunistic developers.

The [Strategic Assessment for the Perth and Peel Regions](#) was meant to address this problem of reconciling the conservation needs of this region with the need for housing, industry and infrastructure. However, the State Government has put this process on hold while it debates whether to continue it or not. It is time for the Government to stop procrastinating and get on with strategic land use planning and implementing the Bush Forever and Regional Parks proposals. The scientific evidence is clear and our opportunity to establish a world class conservation reserve system in this biodiversity hotspot is diminishing. Future generations will lament this inaction if the Government fails to accept its international responsibilities.

A JEWEL IN THE CROWN OF A GLOBAL BIODIVERSITY HOTSPOT

Hans Lambers, Editor



Artwork by Philippe Nibbeldey

A Jewel in the Crown of a Global Biodiversity Hotspot
\$89.95
Edited by Hans Lambers

South-western Australia is a region of exquisite landscapes and unique plants, animals and fungi. It is one of the World's 'Biodiversity Hotspots', based on its highly diverse, endemic and threatened flora. Greater Perth is particularly well-known for its species richness and endemism, home to numerous Declared Rare Flora and Priority species as well as Threatened Ecological Communities. A Jewel in the Crown of a Global Biodiversity Hotspot has been assembled using current research and understanding about the geology, hydrology, soils, flora, fauna, fungi, archaeology, history and other aspects.

The book has been published jointly by the Kwongan Foundation and the Western Australian Naturalists' Club Inc, Perth. It is available in bookshops.

PUBLICATION DATE: 2019
FORMAT: Paperback
EXTENT: 444 pages
SIZE: 297 x 210 mm
ISBN: 978-0-9806417-4-5

2019 GREAT COCKY COUNT REPORT &

THE GREAT COCKY COUNT'S 10TH BIRTHDAY PARTY

25 September 5-7pm

The WA Ecology Centre
162 Perry Lakes Dr, Floreat

RSVP by 23 September to adam.peck@birdlife.org.au



Photo by R Zelnova

AUSSIE BACKYARD
BIRD COUNT
21-27 October 2019

[REGISTER](#)

Group News Group News Group News

Bungendore Park Environmental Group Inc

Park Bench

The members of the group with the help of the City of Armadale Bushcare Team installed a new park bench in Bungendore Park on Friday, 7 June. This bench was dedicated to all the volunteers who have, over 38 years, maintained and conserved this beautiful natural bush land for future generations.

This is the second park bench we have installed for the visitors to the park to rest or to just sit awhile.

New Brochure

A new brochure prepared by two BPEG members, Alex Leach and John Cartwright has been released. It is a full colour brochure entitled "Milkmaids and Running Postmen – Some plants found in Bungendore Park". Copies are available at the Perth Hills Armadale Visitor Centre.



Photos by A Leach

From left: Sylvia Leach, Penny Versteeg, Michael Elliott, Tony Clark, Laurie Sargeson, John Cartwright.

New Park Signage

The City of Armadale and Bungendore Park Environmental Group combined forces to produce new signage for the park and the official opening took place on Saturday 22nd June. The park is accessed at two points, Main Entrance, Admiral Road, Bedforddale and Christmas Tree Car Park, Albany Hwy, Bedforddale. Entering via the main entrance gives visitors access to the trail head where they have the choice of hiking five walking trails. Entrance via Christmas Tree Car Park to the trail head gives visitors the choice of two walk trails. Honeyeater Hike has been extended to 7.2 km allowing more experienced hikers to take in views from the Darling Range scarp overlooking Armadale and the surrounding coastal plain.

All the walk trails have coloured way markers to assure hikers they are on the correct path.

Phyto-Fighter stations have been repositioned on several of the walk trails and visitors are advised to make use of these boot cleaning stations to help prevent the spread of dieback.

National Tree Day

We had 27 adults and 6 children attend our tree planting day (photos left and bottom). This year we revisited the Christmas Tree Car Park. Our previous attempts to regenerate this area in 2017 was foiled by the vagaries of the weather. This year we decided to water in all 600 plants after they were planted and not rely on rain and apply mulch. The mulch was supplied by the City of Armadale. We also intend to continue applying water to the plants during the summer months in hopes of increasing the plants' survival rate.



Photo by J Cartwright

New trail head signage was installed at Bungendore Park in June.



Photo by A Leach



Photo by A Leach

Group News Group News Group News

Gecko muster and large woody habitat

Grecian Sandwell & Colma Keating,

Canning River Residents Environment Protection Association (CRREPA)

In early 2014, a passer-by alerted us to the large split in the mature *Eucalyptus rudis* (Flooded Gum) on the Lower Canning River Foreshore in Shelley. The lovely spreading tree certainly groaned in the wind as it overhung the dual-use-path and the parking bay.

The City of Canning was notified and in April that year an arborist conducted an ultrasound on the tree. As bark was peeled away to allow for probes to be inserted into the trunk, 10 marbled geckos were disturbed.

A 'fall arrest system' using 'bungy-jump type' ropes was installed in the upper canopy to prevent the split widening and to alert of any major movements in the tree. Unfortunately, the health of the tree continued to decline and finally in late 2018 it was deemed unsafe and the upper branches were removed. The plan was to remove the tree in early 2019, using the root for 'large woody habitat' in the river for fish habitat.



Photo by C Keating

Gecko eggs



Photo by G Sandwell



Photo by C Keating



Photo by G Sandwell



Photo by C Keating

CRREPA volunteers during gecko muster. Geckos and large number of insect species were found under on a tree that had to be removed from the Canning River foreshore in Shelley.

CRREPA decided to relocate as many geckos as possible from the tree before it was removed. In total, 44 geckos were shifted to nearby eucalypts. As we removed bark from the tree and uncovered many insects, geckos, their eggs and skinks it bough to mind an article by Neville Passmore (Perth NRM, 2017) who noted that there is a very strong case for protecting existing native trees in urban areas. A study of one old jarrah tree in Kings Park revealed a level of visitation that is almost incredible. "This one mature jarrah tree supports 83 species of native animals, birds, reptiles and insects. Not a tree but a condominium. By way of contrast, wind pollinated European trees don't have to attract wild-life to achieve pollination".

The bark that was peeled from the tree to expose the geckoes was used as mulch on an adjacent revegetation site.

When the tree was finally cut down, the City of Canning (CoC) organised for the trunk and limbs to be moved to a nearby revegetation site where it now has a second life as large woody habitat (see photo right). In addition, logs and branches from other Council pruning will be used at other CRREPA sites for the same purpose.

The CoC has also planted five new advanced trees to replace the original mature Flooded Gum.



Photo by C Keating

Group News Group News Group News

Wildflower Society WA - Murdoch Branch

Plant identification under the microscope

By Kim Dravnieks

On Saturday 13th July our Branch ran a Basic Native Plant ID workshop at The Cockburn Wetland Centre. It was a popular workshop with 36 people coming along for the afternoon. After a quick run through of basic concepts about local plants and soil types, the hierarchical system of naming and some nomenclature (pretty much a semester of university rolled into 30 minutes). Then Committee members Diana, Sheree, Mat and Christine each ran a station aimed at teaching four different ways of identifying native plants: herbarium specimens, printed keys, electronic keys and books. All attendees rotated through each station to try their hand at identifying fresh specimens (Committee member Felicity kept the schedule under control as timekeeper). There was a lot of information packed into three and half hours and some attendees looked quite overwhelmed by the end of the day.

In general, attendees were very happy with the afternoon and some feedback about the most valuable aspects of the workshop include:

"Background introduction into different classes of plants, common Family names and monocot/dicot characteristics."

"Using the keys was good to have someone to explain clearly how they worked."

"Realising that I do know a bit about identifying WA flora. Also meeting like-minded people."

There is clearly an interest in identifying native flora, so our Branch will consider running these workshops on an annual basis.



Use of printed keys (left) and herbaria (right) were two of the four plant identification methods demonstrated at the Basic Native Plant ID workshop held at the Cockburn Wetlands Education Centre. Photos by K Dravnieks

Friends of North Ocean Reef - Iluka Foreshore will be holding a guided Nature Walk along the coastal path through Bush Forever Site 325.

Morning tea will be served following the walk. No need to let us know if you will be attending.

By Don Poynton

When: Saturday 21 September 9.00 - 11.00am.
Where: Meet in the Iluka Foreshore Car Park.



Photo by D Poynton

Coastal bushland at Iluka.

Wildflower Society WA - Murdoch Branch SPRING WALKS

15 September 10am - 12pm at Orelia Park, Kwinana
In partnership with the City of Kwinana

About half of the walk follows paved tracks, accessible by wheelchair or prams, but includes sandy sections. Morning tea provided.

22 September 10am - 12pm at Sir Frederick Samson Park, Samson

In Partnership with the City of Fremantle
Easy walk along unpaved paths with limited wheelchair or pram accessibility.

20 October 9am - 11am at Banksia Road Woodland, Wellard

Long walk along sandy tracks, no wheelchair or pram accessibility.

RSVP via our Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/Murdoch.Branch/>

Group News Group News Group News

Friends of Shenton Bushland

By Marg Owen

Signs in Shenton Bushland, pictured right, alert visitors to the fact that Quendas have been released in Shenton Bushland 'as part of a rehabilitation program by the Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions'. Visitors are also advised to keep all dogs on a lead and keep to the footpaths provided.'

Diggings likely done by Quendas on Guilford Grass bulbs have been seen in the almost adjacent Underwood Avenue Bushland. It did not seem likely but could Quenda have been released in Underwood Avenue Bushland as well?

The City of Nedlands advised that about 16 Quendas had been released in the middle of Shenton Bushland around May 2019 and none had been released in Underwood Bushland. The Quendas in Shenton Bushland have so far not been seen by the motion cameras, so whether they are surviving or not is unknown at this stage.

More Quendas may be released in future to establish a population.

It would seem unlikely but not impossible that one or some Quendas would have left Shenton Bushland and travelled north through narrow roadside bushland areas adjacent to Bedbrook Place, and into Underwood Bushland. Large adult males have a home range of 2 to 7 hectares and females of 1 to 3 hectares.

Advice from the Department of Parks and Wildlife on major threats to Quenda include '*fragmentation, loss of habitat on the coastal plain and in the Wheatbelt, fire in fragmented habitat, predations by foxes (particularly in more open habitat), predation on young by cats and predation around residential areas by dogs.*'



Photo by M Owen



Photo by M Owen

Possible Quenda digging observed in Underwood Avenue bushland.

It will be of great interest to have evidence of Quenda populations in both Shenton and Underwood bushlands, that will obviously enhance bushland health. However fox, cat and dog predation are real threats, and they must be controlled continuously.

Friends of Trigg Beach

A Win for the Coastal Environment at Trigg Beach

By Robyn Murphy

The recent amalgamation of the road reserve on the beach side of West Coast Hwy at North Scarborough with the adjacent South Trigg Beach Class A Reserve 46248 is the culmination of many years of campaigning by local conservation groups.

"This means we can be confident that the remnant Quindalup coastal dune system between Scarborough and Trigg Beaches will be protected forever," spokesperson for the Friends of Trigg Beach Robyn Murphy said.

The long history of the protection of this coastal reserve began in 1981 when the Trigg Bushland and the coastal reserves were identified in the System 6 Study Report as "...having conservation significance due to the rarity of reserved areas within the metropolitan area which provide an example of a belt of native vegetation extending from the sea to tuart and banksia woodland."

However, when the Trigg Bushland was designated as a Class A Reserve in 1989 the coastal reserve inexplicably was not included.

The Friends of Trigg Bushland continued to lobby for the coastal dunes to be given the same protection as the larger Trigg Bushland Reserve. In 1998 the Trigg Bushland and Adjacent Coastal Reserve was recognised in Perth's Bushplan as being of regional environmental significance and the 122ha Trigg Bushland and the approximately 14ha of coastal reserve were later included in Bush Forever Area 308. Both areas are included in the City of Stirling's Trigg Bushland Management Plan.





Photo by I Johnson

View of the coastal bushland within a former road reserve which now classified as Class A reserve, on the border of Scarborough and Trigg.

In 2001 after intensive lobbying and campaigning, the WA Parliament reclassified the South Trigg Beach Reserve from “C” to “A” Class, excluding the road reserve which the City of Stirling advised would be closed and amalgamated in due course. The South Trigg reserve was and remains the only coastal reserve in the City of Stirling to have an “A” classification.

In 2016 the MRA intervened and halted the road closure process and proposed using the road reserve to extend the Esplanade and car parking north of Scarborough Beach through the South Trigg Beach Reserve. Beach Not Bitumen was formed to oppose the proposed road extensions. The campaign supported by the Friends of Trigg Beach and the Friends of Trigg Bushland, resulted in the newly elected McGowan Labor Government announcing in 2017 that the road would not go ahead, and the road closure process would be recommenced.

In the meantime, in 2017 a Threatened Ecological Community was identified within the road reserve, being *Callitris preissii* and has since been registered under the *Biodiversity Conservation Act 2016*. This added further weight to the campaign to protect this reserve.

Landgate has recently issued a Certificate of Title that confirms the closure of the 3.369ha road reserve and the incorporation of the land into the 10.053ha South Trigg



Photo courtesy R Murphy

Satisfied members of the Friends of Trigg Beach.

Beach Class A Reserve. The City of Stirling is nominated as the land managers with responsibility for the care and protection of the coastal reserve.

There is no doubt that without the persistence and dedication of the local community and conservation groups and the support of the Urban Bushland Council, this important coastal reserve would not have received the protection it deserves for future generations.



Photos by B Fremlin

Spring Walk

Sunday 20 October 9am -12 noon

Join UBC and **Friends of Forrestdale** for a walk through the urban treasure of Anstey Keane damplands. It is the second most floristically diverse Bush Forever site on the Swan Coastal Plain and has more plant species than Kings Park. More importantly, its vegetation is in excellent to pristine condition. It is an area of high biological importance.

You will be guided by locals, David and Bryony who love this bushland and are fighting to stop human incursions. They will show us some special places. Bring some morning tea for a stop along the way. The thick sand can be quite difficult to walk through in places.

Group News Group News Group News

Bandicoots and Native Truffles in Shenton Bushland

By Roz Hart

In May 2019, as part of their Quenda re-establishment program, DCBA released 16 Quendas into Shenton bushland. When you walk in this bushland, particularly early or late in the day, you may see them. However there are signs we can look for to indicate their presence. Keep your eyes open for any soil disturbance especially digging. Look out for small pointy holes. These are dug by quendas. Why?



Quendas identify the aroma of native truffles and use their noses to find their favourite food. Truffles can look like laterite pebbles, but, when cut open, show a characteristic labyrinth-like internal structure that you can clearly see in the photo (right). This internal structure tells you that it's not only a fungus, but a truffle – in this case, an Australian native truffle.

This is Hydnangium carneum, a truffle species closely related to the small reddish-brown gilled mushrooms *Laccaria* sp.

Australian native truffles have evolved over about 500,000 years as food for Australia's small mammals such as quendas, woylies, potoroos, bilbies and other small, sensitive-nosed marsupials with digging claws. Truffles are fungi that hold their spores in an enclosed 'packet' that has evolved to be eaten by a mammal for dispersal.

In Europe truffles were first described about 1,600BC, and have been prized by people and wild animals for centuries.

So what's the story in our ancient land, Australia? Australian truffles evolved over an extraordinarily long period together with our small mammals in south-west WA, as a way of adapting to the increasingly arid climate. Instead of spores drying out quickly and losing viability when released into the air, what better way than to evolve a sealed fruiting body to protect them, with a scent to attract mammals to eat them and then poop out the spores in a nice little packet of fertiliser? At the same time, Australian mammals evolved highly sensitive noses and handy digging implements : claws, to easily find these buried fruiting bodies and consume the highly nutritious truffles.

Truffles are the fruiting bodies of mycorrhizal (partner) fungi that plants rely on to gather extra water, minerals and other nutrients and exchange them for sugars that only plants can manufacture using photosynthesis. Truffle spores pass unharmed through the marsupial gut (this process had to evolve too) and are deposited some distance from where they were consumed - aiding spread. Any plant seeds in the area germinate together with their partner fungi spores right there in the poo, ready and available to form a new mycorrhizal relationship. Win-win situation! The forest floor is turned over, aiding soil aeration and decomposition; the mammal obtains the food it requires; the fungus is dispersed to new areas; and the plants access new mycorrhizal relationships so that new seedlings grow strong and resilient.

Today, Australian truffles have become such an important part of our small mammals' diets that an initial conservation plan to increase the population of the rare Gilberts potoroo failed until it was discovered that the potoroos were unable to reproduce without their diet of truffles.

Over the last 40 years it has been established that Australia has very many species of truffles, more than anywhere else in the world.

On your next visit to Shenton bushland, perhaps to see the lovely spring wildflowers, keep an eye open for quenda diggings and please let the City of Nedland's Bushcare Officer, Vicki Shannon know. She will appreciate photos of holes, and especially if you are lucky enough to spot a quenda. She can be contacted via email: vshannon@nedlands.wa.gov.au.

Group News Group News Group News

Stopping development in a reserve does not stop locals demonstrating care

By James Mumme



Friends of Point Peron (FPP) was founded by James Mumme in 2006 in response to letters in local Rockingham newspapers saying that Cape Peron was full of rubbish and weeds and needed a marina. The initial idea was for people to adopt patches of bush and look after them in their own time. For six years 14 families pulled out Geraldton carnation weed from their patches, removed rubbish and planted over 6,000 seedlings with good support from the Department of Parks and Wildlife who funded planting, a water pump and trailer.

An elderly couple could often be found carrying two litre bottles of water to their seedlings. They even made a sign – Bert and Belle's Patch.

Once a fortnight we would meet as a group to work on one family's patch. Today, only two adoptive families continue tidying up their plots once a year as natural regrowth has complemented re-plantings and flourished in the absence of competing weeds.

Then work stopped as key members became involved in other organisations attempting to save the Park from the proposed Mangles Bay Marina. We researched, lobbied and wrote submissions to various levels of government losing every battle. Ultimately in mid 2016, 60 of us appeared in person before the WA Planning Commission after nearly 500 sent in written submissions. After those hearings, hopes began to revive because planning issues looked like they might sink the project. In the end they did, though not without huge work into the environmental issues.

FPP began tackling Geraldton carnation weeds again and moved on to removing woody weeds – mainly Brazilian peppers and buckthorns – which have gone feral during the time the Mangles Bay Marina proposal was hanging over the Park. Many of the threats to the TECs at close-by Lake Richmond are understood to be originating across the road in the Cape Peron Reserve. In 2018, 130 volunteers took part in 28 clean ups to deal with thousands of weeds. The City of Rockingham have also come to the party in offering to remove the weedy trees.

Excellent support has also come from Conservation Volunteers Australia, the Urban Bushland Council, Kolbe College Bush Rangers, Safety Bay SHS Bush Rangers, Southern Baptist College Surf Cadets and Hands Off Point Peron. In this post Mangles Bay Marina era challenges still remain. Elements in the local community are still eyeing the Cape for development. Bush Forever sites are not yet well enough valued or protected. A letter to the local newspaper talked about the 'scrub' being perfect for a caravan park!

To resist those challenges, Friends of Pt Peron are demonstrating to the community and to decision-makers that people *do care* about the Park and are willing to get their hands dirty and their shirts sweaty. We are also supporting Parks and Wildlife's work and helping to prepare for the eventual Coastal Park of the South (or whatever it will be called). The list of 2019 achievements to date is significant; including the removal of many woody weeds, seed collection from 20 species that are used now in two trials of different methods of sowing them; planting and on-going care of 2,700 seedlings funded by Coastwest grant; purchasing of new equipment so we don't have to borrow from friends; obtaining a grant for \$11,000 in conjunction with Conservation Volunteers Australia and Coastcare to plant 3,800 seedlings in 2020; making a video to orient volunteers and the public to what we do; and providing input to DBCA's review of recreation in the Park. The Group also gratefully received a 1,000 litre water tank installed by DBCA near our plantings and saw installation of a fence to protect our seedlings.



Friends of Point Peron enjoying lunch after a bushcare morning.

The challenges that remain are better outcomes in enlisting local land holders in taking responsibility for protecting the Park and in engaging the community in putting forward ideas for improving the Park so that it is inviting, educational and enjoyable.

WILDFLOWER SOCIETY OF WA-EASTERN HILLS BRANCH

By Pam Riordan

Our plant sale in May is always a highlight of the year, our major fundraiser and it has become a well known feature of the "hills" area diary, with people regularly attending the sales. This year was no exception and it was a perfect day, not too hot, and certainly no rain. It was very well attended, and most of our growers sold most of their plants.

Group News Group News Group News



Northern Suburbs again joined us with it also being a successful sale for them.

Our growers grow the plants from seed or cuttings and nurture them through our long hot summer in their own gardens. A very comprehensive catalogue is produced and is available on-line a couple of weeks before the sale. Then the day before the sale there is a frantic day of sorting and arranging the hundreds of plants in order ready for the following day. The sale always opens to a waiting crowd and the first two hours are a frenzy.

This year we celebrated the plant sale success with a thankyou lunch for the volunteers involved. It was agreed this sale has truly been fine tuned over its almost 40 years!

We've had more excellent speakers at our monthly meetings, including Elaine Davison talking on "DNA and Marsupial Mushrooms" on August 23 and spring wildflowers rambles that started on August 24 at Moola Road in Mahogany Creek.

Our very own Una Bell will talk on native grasses on September 27th. These talks are held at Octagonal Hall in Glen Forrest and start at 7.30pm.



Another busy and successful plant sale in the Hills was celebrated with a lunch for the volunteers involved. Photos by P Riordan

For more information:

<http://www.wildflowersocietywa.org.au/branches/eastern-hills-branch>

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/easternhillswildflowersoc/>
email eastern.hills.branch@wildflowersocietywa.org.au



The season is Djilba and our corridor is bursting with colour and weeds so please join us for a morning of 'counting' (GPS mapping) Tuarts and Banksias, hand weeding and a Gladi grab (Gladiolus-an intrusive beauty in our corridor) in The Forrest rd/Stock rd bushland.

Saturday 14th September 8.00am-10.00am

Meeting at the South West corner of Stock and Forrest roads Hamilton Hill

Tools and morning tea will be provided. Please bring your own gloves (we will have some spares), water and wear enclosed footwear, suitable clothing and a hat.

Last year The Cockburn Community Wildlife Corridor group applied for and received a sustainability grant from the City of Cockburn. We used this grant to purchase two GPS units to help map (count) the Banksias and Tuarts that are in The Corridor. The information gained from mapping these important woodland species can then be used to advocate for protection of this special corridor of bushland and ensure that any development is done with sensitivity and with the best interests of bush in mind. Please follow this link to register your place.

<https://www.eventbrite.com.au/e/djilba-weeding-gladi-grab-and-gps-tuart-and-banksia-mapping-morning-saturday-14th-september-800am-tickets-71262595341>

Kellie Ratcliff, Diana Corbyn and Louise Corteen, Bush-care Working Group
Cockburn Community Wildlife Corridor

Our Neighbourhood Nature Values, Issues and Solutions to promote

The following are some messages that the UBC encourage you to use when you either visit your local MP or write letters. Also, if you would like some company when you go to meet with your MP, please let us know.

VALUES

1. Habitat: Homes for the multitude of birds, mammals, reptiles, insects, pollinators and fungi living on thousands of flora species in unique, complex ecosystems such as Banksia woodlands.

2. Connection to nature: Our closeness to iconic species such as Black Cockatoos, Banksias, Quenda and lots of wildflowers and tiny ground dwellers. Social and Aboriginal spiritual connection.

Perth is a unique 'city in the bush', in a biodiversity hotspot as recognised in Bush Forever.

3. Human health and well-being: People feel better after walking in nature.

Patients in hospitals get better quicker if they have a view out to nature. Fiona Stanley Hospital was designed so that all facilities have views to nature.

Children behave better after being outdoors.

Nature is a healing balm for children and adults with emotional stress.

4. Cooling our suburbs: In a warming and drying climate the natural canopy cover keeps us cooler in summer.

5. Supplies oxygen: When was the last time you considered that the oxygen we and our families breathe is provided by vegetation? We are all dependent on plants in nature every minute each day.

Rainforest clearing and burning in the Amazon, Brazil has raised public awareness of this value, which also applies to our Swan Coastal Plain woodlands and south west forests.



6. Child development and mystery places for kids: for their fascination, to explore, find and observe little creatures. Outdoor experiences in nature are essential for child development as fully explained by Professor Richard Louv in his book *'Last Child in the Woods'*.

7. Outdoor classroom: Patches of bushland in and near primary schools provide nature's outdoor classroom for learning about its complex ecosystems with interacting with plants and animals.

8. Aesthetic appeal: Viewing our local nature is pleasing to our hearts and minds. Its view breaks up the hard buildings

and hard surfaces.

9. Cultural links: Aboriginal significance of country is spiritual, there is a strong sense of belonging to the land with all its natural features.



ISSUES AND THREATS

1. Clearing and loss of urban bushland patch by patch: the classic death of a thousand cuts. Inappropriate use of bushland areas for services by Water Corporation, Main Roads, Landcorp.

2. Continuing loss of endangered species and communities: For example loss of Banksia Woodlands, Tuart Woodlands, iconic species Carnaby's Cockatoo, Forest Red-tailed Black Cockatoo, Baudin's Cockatoo. Failure of government laws and regulations to protect these endangered species and habitats.

3. Dieback disease, Marri Canker: and other plant diseases are increasing.

4. Groundwater drawdown: especially on the Swan Coastal Plain causing vegetation deaths exacerbated by groundwater abstraction bores.

5. Feral animals killing or displacing native fauna: cats, foxes, dogs, Rainbow Lorikeets, Corellas, Kookaburras.

6. Weeds: invasive environmental weeds, often horticultural escapees. No State Government lead agency for coordinating weed control. Weeds such as Gazania and Fountain Grass not banned from sale. Environmental roadside weed list species not banned from sale, nor removal required.

7. Climate change: rainfall decline already significant in Perth and south west WA. Erratic weather and seasons causing groundwater decline, flowering times not always coinciding with pollinator presence means absent or less seed set.

8. Human disrespect for bushland: rubbish dumping, off-road vehicles and bush bashing, trail bikes mountain bike racing in bushland degrades understorey and spreads dieback. This is preventable degradation which is costly to repair.

9. Bush Forever sites are not all being protected and managed. Complete implementation of the world class Bush Forever plan and program for a comprehensive reserve system in the Perth region Swan Coastal Plain as required is

now 9 years overdue. There is a lack of adequate State Government recurrent funding for management of many sites especially by DBCA.

10. Lack of overall recognition, respect, protection and management of biodiversity: State agencies and local governments work in silos.

11. Loss of native tree canopy and connectivity: through backyard gardens, along streets, parklands. Local native species to provide linkages not being planted enough.

12. Excess fire in a fragmented landscape: Prescribed burns on the highly cleared Swan Coastal Plain increase fire risk as grassy weeds increase after fire. Fauna and pollinators are killed and lack adequate refugia and linkages to help re-colonisation. Excess fires caused by juvenile arson in many cases. Many children are not being taught about fire and its dangers.

14. Lack of State Government leadership and recognition of values of Perth's bushland.

Lack of government funding to employ enough staff and expertise to properly manage our Bush Forever reserve system. Lack of State and Local Government protection and management of TECs and habitat of endangered species. Federal Conservation Advices not being used.

SOLUTIONS

1. Express the need for **urgent** action by the State government to **address climate change** and the **extinction crisis**. Call for leadership by the State to protect Perth's precious bushland.

2. The State Government needs to **invest in science and management staff of bushland**, with a greatly increased recurrent budget especially for DBCA Swan Region so that it can properly protect and manage the reserve system in collaboration with other land managers.

3. Ensure **complete implementation of Bush Forever** as planned. This includes purchase and initial capital works of all sites by WAPC, and then their transfer to the Crown as 'A' class reserves and allocation to suitable conservation land managers (DBCA or LGAs). DBCA needs greatly increased recurrent funding for management of the sites they plan to take over.

Local Biodiversity Strategies and Plans according to approved guidelines need to be completed by each Local Government Authority.

Statement of Planning Policy 2.8 for bushland in the Perth Metropolitan Region must be rigorously enforced.

4. **Protect all Banksia Woodlands and Tuart Woodlands** of the Swan Coastal Plain. Ensure the federal Approved Conservation Advices are followed. This says for each community: *'PROTECT the ecological community to protect its further loss of extent and condition.'* This means no more clearing.

The Advice for the Banksia Woodlands also requires Bush Forever implementation in lieu of a Recovery Plan in the first instance.

5. Declare a **Clearing Moratorium in the Perth Peel Region**, as this biodiverse region is already over-cleared and under threat. Stopping the patch by patch loss can be enacted under the Clearing Regulations under the Environmental Protection Act. Exemptions do not apply as the whole area is now an 'Environmentally Sensitive Area', and comprises Threatened Ecological Communities.

Recent international publicity calling for stopping the burning and clearing of the oxygen producing Amazon Rainforest in Brazil raises the parallel issue here in WA forests and woodlands. We need to stop clearing and burning our woodlands of the Swan Coastal Plain as well as our south west forests.

6. **Promote the values of neighbourhood nature** in each local area. Invite local MPs to visit local bushland with their Friends groups, promote and encourage bushland education for local primary schools, publicise guided walks and information with photos in the local press.

7. Raise the profile of **'Parks for People' in the Perth – Peel Region** where most people live, work and play. This implies DBCA investment in Perth's Bush Forever 'CAR' reserve system.

A Jewel in the Crown of a Global Biodiversity Hotspot

Free symposium and book launch organised by the Royal Society of Western Australia, co-hosted by The Beeliar Group, The Western Australian Naturalists' Club, and the Kwongan Foundation, focusing on a proposed Regional Park, stretching from Lesmurdie Falls to Canning River on the Swan Coastal Plain.

**Saturday 14 September, 8.30 am - 5.30pm at the UWA Oceans Institute,
Fairway Crawley.**

Followed by an excursion on Sunday, 15 September, 9.00 am - 12.00pm at 309 Bickley Rd, Kenwick

The event is free but seating is limited, so please book via Eventbrite:

Symposium: <https://www.eventbrite.com.au/e/a-jewel-in-the-crown-of-a-global-biodiversity-hotspot-symposium-tickets-66791690745>

Excursion: <https://www.eventbrite.com.au/e/a-jewel-in-the-crown-of-a-global-biodiversity-hotspot-excursion-tickets-69279210985>

destroy the soil and its life and big trees. The Great Western Woodlands are fire sensitive. Aboriginal people only burnt very small areas and not big trees. Leslie said *'we push the truth that we were the best land managers on earth.'*

The consistent message from all these speakers is that fire authorities are not consulting and working together with the local Aboriginal people in caring for country. Current burning practices are contrary to indigenous practices of cool burning at small scale only.

The health effects of prescribed burns and wildfires was the second conference theme. Keynote speaker Faye Johnston, University of Tasmania, led an expert team which developed the only global mortality burden estimate for landscape fire smoke. Her research showed there are considerable health impacts of smoke from prescribed burns resulting in deaths, hospital admissions, increased suffering by asthmatics and those in poor health. Costs of health services increase greatly. The second speaker presented the findings of a study that looked at location correlations of landscape fires with adverse health effects in Perth. In Perth from 2012 and 2017 prescribed burn events were estimated to lead to increased costs of \$20 million. These considerable human health impacts of smoke seem to be ignored in planned burns and are not included as a cost of this fire risk management practice. The last presenter under the health impacts heading discussed the intangible benefits and costs of bushfire management, demonstrating the narrow focus of the current cost-benefit considerations.

There were many other speakers describing damage done by landscape scale fires in south west forests and outback areas, with hot fires, and lack of mosaic burning. The third theme of the conference focused on **the impact of prescribed burns and wildfires on biodiversity**.

The case of prescribe burning the peat lands in the Walpole Wilderness managed by DBCA was astounding. It is well known that peat areas must never be burnt. The location of the peat areas had not been and still is not adequately mapped by DBCA. The landscape scale fire destroyed the peat which burnt for 4 months. The photos showed the stark and complete destruction and loss of biodiversity of these former species rich peat lands. After the fire, wild pigs invade, exacerbating the damage.

Several case studies looked at use of prescribed fire for recovery of threatened flora. However, these were carefully managed projects, involving ecologists, land managers, fire practitioners and in one instance also the local Aboriginal people.

On the second day of the Conference, the first section continued to focus on impact of burns on biodiversity.

Keynote speaker was Professor Kingsley Dixon. Our WA ecosystems are fire sensitive. In the south west of WA \$53 million is spent on the target of burning 200,000 ha each year. This target excludes wildfire and escaped burns. Long unburnt sites are essential for survival of a suite of animal species, and longer fire-free intervals are needed in a drying climate.

Short burn intervals are changing the species composition. Post-fire return intervals vary greatly. Some species of Banksias need 20-30 years for adequate seed set and replacement, others need 15-20 years, 10-14 years and so on, and for the Great Western Woodlands, *Eucalypts salubris* woodland need more than 200 years fire free interval, and for Jarrah forest 80-100 years. It was also pointed out that climate change will extend the recovery times.

The season of burning is also critical. Autumn burns have the highest survival rate, winter and spring very poor with loss of seeders as well as bird hatchlings. Summer wildfire results in ~80% survival. His alternatives to prescribed burning are on the right:

Alternatives : safe, effective and acceptable interventions?
Precision detection; rapid suppression; strategic rather than target driven; adaptively manage.

Professor Steve Hopper explained that there is a lack of evidence for the position of prescribed burning extensive areas each year. Mallees can be wiped out in two fires. Honey Possums need more than 25 years to recover after fire. For forests, there is a lack of understanding of impacts of fire on rare flora and fauna. For 40% of our WA flora, it is not known if they are resprouters or reseeders or geophytes. Prescribed burning continues in the absence of evidence for 200,000ha to be burnt each year. Critically endangered plants are being killed, and the impact of dieback is not known. Scientists call for abandonment of the fixed target of 200,000 ha per year to be prescribe burned.

Many speakers emphasised that each area and ecosystem is different and generalised burning practices are not appropriate. Each vegetation type and landform needs its own consideration. Traditional knowledge and practice by Aboriginal people for each patch of country needs inclusion. Fire for country is *very* specific.

Philip Zylstra explained there is an underlying assumption in current practices that forest flammability and rate of fire spread is directly proportional to fuel load. This is not published and scrutinized by science. This lack of a relationship was found by Neil Burrows at CALM Science in 1999. Flame height predicted was not based on fuel load. Not all fires are crown fires. Sclerophylly, leaf traits, and plant structure explain 80% of fire behaviour. Dense shrubs produce bigger flames. In comparison, old forest with sparse undergrowth produces less big fire. Most extreme fires occur a few years (under 10 years) after fire.

Philip posed the question: *'where are the measurements in old forest? i.e. in long unburnt areas.* These long unburnt areas are rarely measured.

He summarised key issues:

There is disrespect of Aboriginal burn practices.
Let's stop and listen to them and learn.
Measure mature forests instead of just regrowth.
Use the peer review standard.
A duty of care is needed.

To view available conference presentations, go to
<http://www.pbc2019.com.au/abstracts.php>



Photo courtesy UBC

BAIGUP WETLANDS on the Swan River Maylands Guided Walk 15th September 10am to 11.30am RSVP [here](#) and bring a cuppa to share at end

This site visit is a chance to meet people from other community environment groups around the metro area while exploring a beautiful Bush Forever site on the Swan River that deserves to be better known. Baigup Wetlands is a 16.4 ha reserve that attracts many different kinds of birds all year round. Two freshwater lakes are home to our South-western Snake-necked (aka 'oblong') **Turtles** which breed in the surrounding vegetation. Sixteen species of waterbirds use the lakes for breeding. There is just a chance you may see gorgeous **Australian Shelduck** ducklings with their unbelievably

bly protective parents or **Buff-banded Rail** chicks looking like fluffy black pompoms on their long spindly legs. These are two species that have been observed with young in September in previous years.

Challenges at Baigup include Acid Sulphate scalds, damage to the riverbank by speeding boats, fox and cat predation of wildlife, death of native vegetation due to salinity in places, and a daunting history of massive weed infestation. Strenuous efforts by Baigup Wetland Interest Group and the reserve managers (City of Bayswater and Department of Planning, Lands and Heritage) have got weeds under control in recent years but Pampas Grass, Blackberry, Arum Lily, Morning Glory and Dolichos Vine (that smother and kill native trees), plus pretty well every annual weed, especially Blackberry Nightshade, you can think of, still demand constant vigilance.

But for every challenge there are also victories. Extensive planting and water management along with ongoing weed control is providing habitat for an increasing number of birds, animals and reptiles. Perhaps **Quenda** will be reintroduced eventually? That is one of the goals of Baigup Wetland Interest Group and the City of Bayswater.

How to get there:

Meet in Hinds Reserve car park next to the Paddle-sports (aka Rowing Club) facilities at the end of Milne Street Bayswater. Members of Baigup Wetland Interest Group will meet you there and take you into Baigup Wetlands. Wear sun protection and sturdy footwear and bring insect repellent or wear long sleeves and pants in case mosquitoes are around.



Photo by G McDonald

South-western Snake-necked Turtle laying eggs beside path at Baigup Oct 2015.

SUCCESSFUL ENVIRONMENTAL CAMPAIGNS

Monday 23 September from 6.00 to 8.00pm at the City West Lotteries House, West Perth

Join members for a panel discussion focused around securing success in environmental campaigns. To find out more go to <https://www.bushlandperth.org.au/event/securing-success/>

ANSTEY-KEANE WALK

Sunday 20 October from 9.00am to 12 noon at corner of Anstey and Keane Roads in Forrestdale

Join members for a panel discussion focused around securing success in environmental campaigns. To find out more go to <https://www.bushlandperth.org.au/event/anstey-keane-walk/>

FIRE ECOLOGY OF BANKSIA WOODLANDS

Tuesday 26 November from 6.00 to 8.00pm at the City West Lotteries House, West Perth

Join members for a panel discussion focused around securing success in environmental campaigns. To find out more go to <https://www.bushlandperth.org.au/event/the-fire-ecology-of-banksia-woodlands/>



SUPPORT THE URBAN BUSHLAND COUNCIL - JOIN OR RENEW YOUR MEMBERSHIP

Groups:

Membership with voting rights is available to groups committed to the protection of urban bushland for \$45 a year (GST included). A growing membership strengthens the cause and groups benefit from the network.

Individuals:

Supporter membership is only \$35 per year (GST included). Supporters can attend meetings and receive copies of the "Urban Bush Telegraph"

The annual membership fees include an electronic copy of the *Urban Bush Telegraph* (currently published quarterly). Printed copies can be ordered at a cost of \$15.00 per annum for four editions.

Join or renew on-line (<https://www.bushlandperth.org.au/membership/>) or send your name, address and cheque to:

Treasurer, Urban Bushland Council WA Inc, PO Box 326, West Perth WA 6872

Office:

URBAN BUSHLAND COUNCIL WA Inc

Lotteries House 2 Delhi Street West Perth WA 6008

Postal address: PO Box 326 West Perth WA 6872

Ph 9420 7207 E-mail: ubc@bushlandperth.org.au



Urban Bushland Council WA Inc



<http://twitter.com/#!/UrbanBushlandWA>

NEWSLETTER ITEMS

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Copy deadline - 10 October 2019

THE URBAN BUSH TELEGRAPH

ISSN 2208-4770