


Geographe Network News

REPORTING ON EVENTS ACROSS THE CATCHMENT



The Yallingup Scene

As to be expected at this time of year the "dog days" are upon us at Yallingup. Both Yallingup and Smiths Beach are packed most days with holiday makers. The weather has been good - the lifesavers have had fewer rescue events this year as seas have been slight and the swell usually low. But enough incidents have occurred to underline the great value of having lifesavers at both beaches during the season.

Thanks are due to the SLSA for providing the lifesavers and the Shire for picking up the tab. For our part we loan the 4WD "Mule" beach vehicle to the lifesavers which helps them in accessing all parts of the beach quickly, and getting any casualties up to the car parks.

Our major Coastcare project at Injidup, a \$38,000 grant from NHT to arrest the enormous "blow-out" there, has now been completed. It will be some time before the full effect of the artificial dunes that have been constructed can be fully assessed, but the initial results have been very encouraging. Together with the Department of CALM we hope to continue into another stage of the work. Meanwhile we are trying to organise an aerial photo which will help enormously in the evaluation and future planning process.

We have also been successful in our application to the Dept of Fisheries for a "Fishcare" grant with

which we will be continuing our work in protecting the biota and general environment of Yallingup Reef. This will be achieved by providing the public with more information about the marine species found there, and why the biodiversity and habitat must be preserved. The rock platform at Yallingup is unique in that both tropical and temperate species are found there. We would welcome any ideas as to how this can be best achieved - and any help in carrying it out!

The Yallingup Brook Action Plan is winding down now, and under Jenny Mitchell's skilled management a great deal has been accomplished in restoring the natural environment, especially between Caves House and the sea which was badly degraded. We will be continually monitoring the brook for weed regrowth and plan to continue some work there in conjunction with the re-development of the property around the hotel.

Finally it will be Clean-Up Australia Day on Sunday March 2nd. We will again be co-ordinating the task of cleaning up the foreshore areas, road verges etc in the immediate vicinity of Yallingup and Smiths Beach. It is pleasing to note that this year there will be a bigger effort throughout Busselton Shire. We would certainly welcome any help that morning down here. Jane from the Shire's Health Department would also like to hear from anyone who would be happy to assist (9781 0444).

Community Nursery Up and Running

The Geographe Community Landcare Nursery is now operating from the new site on Queen Elizabeth Avenue. The Nursery is currently open on Tuesday mornings 8am to 12pm, and all are welcome to drop by to help out, or even just to have a look and say hello. Activities include washing and filling pots, sowing seed, plant division and potting on, general construction and maintenance jobs. Many thanks to all our volunteers for their help!

The Nursery has recently received a \$10,000 grant for a Nursery Coordinator from the Regional Development Scheme through the South West Development Commission. We are therefore seeking a part-time Coordinator to oversee nursery operations and coordinate volunteer activities (see advertisement back page).



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You win some...

The Department of Agriculture has given the Toby Inlet Catchment Group funds to progress its weed program. Energy will be directed at all stakeholders within the catchment, with a weed attack coordinated by member Sue Henderson, assisted by Raechelle Thomas. The object of the control is to target all declared weeds within the Toby Inlet Catchment such as arum lily and bridal creeper.

With assistance from the Shire of Busselton we have a now have a database of names of all property owners within the Toby Inlet catchment. Information fliers will be sent out to all. Declared weeds will be monitored and assistance given to the property owner if needed. If you need help to eradicate these weeds please contact Brian Clay on 9755 3384. Do not forget that you may have a declared weed on your property and are therefore obligated to eradicate it.

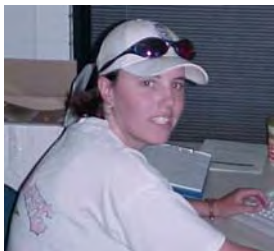
The Shire is also working with the TIC Group to progress the vesting of vacant crown land within the Toby Inlet. The Shire has applied for vesting of Vacant Crown Land near the Toby Inlet Bridge and the Toby Inlet foreshore. Once these areas are vested in the Shire, the Shire can then implement the Toby Inlet and Associated Wetland Management Plan.

We look forward to another good year and thank our members and the agencies for their support.

...and you lose some...

The TIC Group is disappointed that the Commonwealth Government's Envirofund has declined to fund a project to remove sediment and construct a separator dam in Toby Inlet near Caves Rd. The project arose from recommendations of the Toby Inlet Management Plan and entailed removal of some of the silt to deepen the water body, and installation of a dam to separate salt and freshwater ecosystems. The EPA recognised the project as remedial in nature.

Planting trees will be limited this year due to lack of funding.



Work Experience **Janine Fitzpatrick**

While home in Busselton during the summer holidays, my Melbourne University course required that I complete 4 weeks work placement with an organisation of my choice. This brought me to GeoCatch.

The variety of issues that GeoCatch are involved in, make each day interesting. Surveying water catchments, seed collecting and a large involvement in the new community nursery, were just a few of the activities on hand.

Being on-site and physically involved in real environmental issues, creates a completely new learning curve that cannot be taught in the classroom. It was a pleasure to be a part of the team and the great work that they do.

2003 Trails Funding is now available for planning, upgrading, developing and promoting recreational trails. Application forms are available through Department of Sport and Recreation Statewide offices. Applications close Friday 28 March 2003. Visit www.dsr.wa.gov.au for more info.

Funding Update

The Commonwealth has agreed to provide Foundation Funding to the South West Region to support the accreditation process required for NAP and NHT funding to flow. The Commonwealth advised that the South West Region was well advanced with its Regional Strategy and should complete accreditation in 6 months or less. Foundation Funding will include: updating the Geographe Catchment Management Strategy; developing good projects (3 years), developing targets and contributing to the regional planning process. For the Geographe catchment, the Foundation Funding means funding equivalent to 0.5FTE to undertake the above tasks. **This position will be advertised in local papers in February.**

History

Funding arrangements for natural resource and environmental management projects are being implemented under the National Action Plan for Water Quality and Salinity (NAP) and the extension to the Natural Heritage Trust (NHT2). NAP allocates funding to 21 priority catchments across Australia where salinity and water quality are priority issues (the south west region is included). NHT2 operates across the whole nation. The allocation of funds is based on accredited regional plans and funds allocated via investment strategies which are set up by the priorities in the regional plan. Plans will have to be accredited by the State and Commonwealth agencies in order to gain NAP/NHT2 funding. Interim funding has been allocated, called Foundation Funding, to allow South West Catchments Council partners to meet accreditation.

A meeting of community groups is being organised for March to commence this task. **Contact GeoCatch after February 17th to confirm the meeting details.**

Lower Vasse River Algae Update

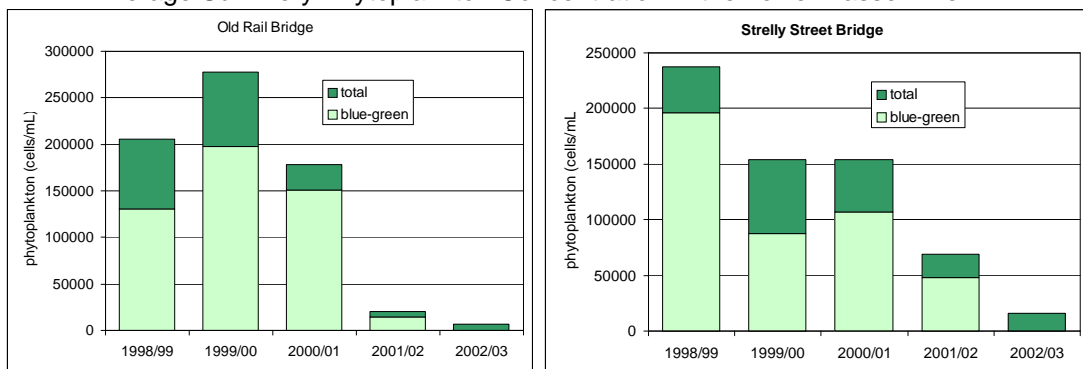
The Water and Rivers Commission commenced routine monitoring in the Vasse-Wonnerup system in December 2002. This included fortnightly monitoring at Strelly Street Bridge and the Old Rail Bridge in the Lower Vasse River. Both sites have remained satisfactory with respect to phytoplankton levels and no warnings have yet been issued. The total concentration of algae at the Strelly St site on 16 January 2003 was 51,510 cells/mL, however this was mainly a bloom of harmless diatoms. The blue-green algae concentration was 101 cells/mL. At the Old Rail Bridge site, the total concentration was 15,453 with no blue-green algae present.

These results are excellent in comparison to previous summers, as shown by the graphs below. While we are not certain exactly the reasons for this dramatic change, we can be fairly confident that the combination of initiatives that have been implemented through the Lower Vasse River Cleanup Program are having a positive effect.

The Phoslock trials last summer are likely to have contributed to reduced algal blooms at the Old Rail Bridge, but the Strelly St site is within the control area that was not tested. Phoslock is a clay product made from rare earths designed to bind phosphorus thereby limiting algal growth.

Other factors likely to have contributed are rural and urban catchment management, dredging, removal of deciduous trees from the foreshores, and improved river ecology through revegetation.

Average Summer Phytoplankton Concentration in the Lower Vasse River



Geographe-Cape to Cape CONFLUENCE 2002

Confluence, *kon'floo-ens*, n. a flowing together, or the place of meeting, of rivers.



On November 14th six classes from different schools in the Geographe and Cape to Cape catchments came together learn about our waterways and coast. The students participated in lots of fun hands-on activities including a frog symphony, identifying macroinvertebrates, playing the Sunset over the Catchment boardgame, participating in the unhealthy river story and the coastal food web game, and learning about fishing for the future. In the afternoon the students helped to create a mural of a river running through the catchment to the sea. The event was run by Ribbons of Blue with support from Coastcare, Department of Fisheries and the Busselton-Dunsborough Environment Centre.

Volunteers Needed

We have 2,000 plants to go in along the banks of the Lower Vasse River.

If you would like to help, please meet at the Old Railway Station, Rotary Park Busselton, on **Wednesday 19th February at 9am.**

Bring your gloves and a spade.

www.geocatch.asn.au

MANAGING MARRI AND ARMSTRONG RESERVES IN DUNSBOROUGH

Marri and Armstrong Reserves, located between Cape Naturaliste Road and Gifford Road in Dunsborough, are to be the focus of a new management plan being prepared for the Shire of Busselton. Sue Elscot is currently gathering information about the reserves which will be presented at a community meeting to be held at Dunsborough Hall in early March. Anyone interested in participating in the future management of the reserves should attend the meeting, where people can express their views and ideas for the reserves, and sign up as a member of the Friends Group which is being established for the reserves. Please contact Sue Elscot (Green Iguana, Dunsborough) on 9756 8260 or 041 935 4484 for more information.



FEATURE PLANT – *Verticordia*: The turner of hearts

The stunning new book *Verticordia: The turner of hearts* is the definitive guide to this exquisite and unique Australian Wildflower. For author Elizabeth George it is the realisation of an 'improbable dream'. Illustrated with beautiful paintings by Margaret Pieroni, it provides comprehensive and user-friendly information on identification and cultivation

When the project began, about fifty species were known and it was thought there might possibly be about twenty more to be described – 101 species, 13 subspecies and 30 varieties of *verticordia* have made it into the book.



Verticordia ananeotes.
An example of the lovely artwork in the new book.

Dennis Cooper is one local naturalist with a passion for *verticordias*. Recently Dennis had the privilege of accompanying these two ladies when they visited Busselton to check a new population of *Verticordia plumosa ananeotes*, found by Fred and Arthur Taylor. They then went to another spot where there are hybrids between *V. ananeotes* and *V. vassensis*. Each plant shows to varying degrees the influence of both parents.

Many thanks to Dennis Cooper for providing us with **FEATURE PLANT** information for each issue of Geographe Network News.

PART-TIME NURSERY & VOLUNTEER COORDINATOR

The Geographe Community Landcare Nursery is seeking part-time coordinator to work closely with volunteers to coordinate nursery activities and maintain the nursery's database. The successful applicant will have excellent organisational and interpersonal skills and some knowledge of native plant propagation. The coordinator will operate on a contract basis with an ABN and appropriate insurance. The budget for this position is \$10,000 over a 12-month period. Interested persons should send a letter of application including a proposed hourly rate, together with their CV to the Busselton-Dunsborough Environment Centre, PO Box 291 Busselton 6280. Enquiries can be made to BDEC on 9754 2049.

Hal's Weed Spot

Weed Audit

The Shire of Busselton worked with GeoCatch, the Department of Agriculture and with extensive input from active community groups to map priority weeds in the Busselton Shire. *Thanks to all who assisted with the mapping!*

The Capel LCDC has also allocated some funds to continue the weed audit in the north east of the Geographe Catchment in the Capel Shire. Interested persons can contact Beth Golden on 97272589.

The audit will assist targeted and coordinated action in the coming year.

Bushland Weeds Manual & Workshop

"Bushland Weeds: A Practical Guide to their Management" has recently been released. The manual was written by Kate Brown and Kris Brooks as part of a NHT funded four year project.

A workshop is being held in Bridgetown on Friday 7 March 2003 to introduce the Manual. The workshop and manual are designed for Friends Groups, Local Government, Weed Coordinators and Agriculture Protection Officers, Landcare Support Officers, Land for Wildlifers and other landholders who manage private bush and public reserves. The Manual will be available at the workshop and costs \$38.50.

If you are interested in attending the workshop contact :
Theo Nabben - Community Weed & Pest Coordinator - 9780 6270

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