


Geographe Network News

REPORTING ON EVENTS ACROSS THE CATCHMENT



Shire of Busselton Wetland Ecotourism bus-trip

The Shire of Busselton recently endorsed the initial investigation of opportunities for some 'soft' ecotourism involving the Busselton Wetlands. The intention is to scope possibilities including walk trails, bird hides and viewing places, interpretive signage and the potential for a centre to support education, awareness raising and other activities. It is agreed that any activities would need to compliment the ecological and social values of the wetlands and would be done in conjunction with restoration and enhancement. There is good potential to link the Town Precinct to the natural wonders and vistas of the wetlands, right in the heart of Busselton.



GeoCatch and CALM recently supported the Shire to conduct a preliminary bus-trip to view a sample of potential sites around the wetlands. The tour led by Jim Lane gave strong and unanimous support for the investigation of ecotourism options!

The Shire has allocated funds to enable some early community consultation regarding the ecotourism investigation. A workshop will be held within the next two months to gain community input. After receiving feedback the Shire will consider the further allocation of funds for a full feasibility study.

For further information contact Will Oldfield, Shire of Busselton 9781 0444 or Sasha Taylor GeoCatch 9754 4331

Volunteers needed for Nursery

The Geographe Community Landcare Nursery has received orders for 58 000 plants for 2004! There is a very busy program happening. More than 110 species are growing at the nursery, with seeds from a large number of properties in the Capes and Geographe area.

Volunteers are needed to help with nursery operations, a spare hour of your time would be appreciated. Activities include seeding and potting plants, whilst learning about plant propagation and meeting new people (tea and coffee provided).

The nursery is looking good after volunteers put up new shade-cloth on the western side to shade the seedlings from afternoon sun and winter winds.

Opening hours are 8 - 2 pm on Mondays and Tuesdays. Please contact Lynne Boladeras, Nursery Coordinator on 0409 376 976.

Inside this issue

- Algae update
- DairyCatch; Invitation to a Kevin Goss talk and farm walk
- Capel LCDC report
- Toby Inlet Catchment Group report
- Hal's Weed Spot
- Feature plant – sand bottlebrush
- Funding update
- Successful envirofund applications
- Fish survey at cobblers pool



GeoCatch

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Department of
Environment

Algae its bloomin everywhere!

Over the warm summer months the region has experienced a number of Algal Blooms which are showing impacts on the water quality in the Southwest. GeoCatch and the Department of Environment will continue to work with landholders in the catchments to improve the condition of water entering the waterways and encourage development of programs such as DairyCatch and the Water Corporation's Environmental Improvement Initiative to help reduce nutrients.

This summer we have experienced four different algal blooms. Two of the blooms have been non-toxic macro-algae, an indicator of nutrient load in the catchment and two have been the toxic blue green algae. Reducing nutrient runoff throughout the catchment is important to help reduce the chance of blooms next year. Even small steps such as reducing fertiliser use on garden lawns helps.

Macroalgae: *Ulva Sp*

In November, upstream of the Vasse floodgates to Wonnerup townsite on the Vasse Estuary was covered in a green macro algae "which appears similar to lettuce leaves". The Department of Environment's Phytoplankton Ecology Unit (PEU) identified the algae as non toxic *Ulva sp*, commonly referred to as "sea lettuce". The main concern was that as it decomposed a Hydrogen Sulphide gas is emitted which is an unpleasant smell for surrounding residents..



Left – build-up of *Ulva* at Vasse Floodgates,
Right – Estuary View Drive



As the bloom decomposed in early December, the Wonnerup residents played an important role in monitoring Hydrogen sulphide levels throughout different times of the day. The Wonnerup residents also noted that they had a similar bloom a few years ago of a much smaller extent, which again gave a pungent odour as it rotted. The residents at the time were able to move the leaves up onto the banks to dry out the lettuce and help reduce the odour problems. Unfortunately this time the extent of the bloom prevented physical removal.

Filamentous algae: *Cladophora*

Over the Christmas period a filamentous algae identified as *Cladophora* became more abundant than the *Ulva sp* and was photographed over a large area of the Vasse Estuary. Sarah Grigo from PEU Bunbury said "*Cladophora* is another non-toxic macro-algae, which is stringy in structure and can form dense mats on the water surface". The *Cladophora* like the *Ulva sp* (sea lettuce) is expected to smell as it decomposes and may cause problems to the water quality.

GeoCatch and the Department of Environment are closely monitoring the spread of the algae and considering ways to manage the bloom in the future

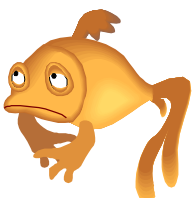
Blue-green: *Anabaena Circinalis* and *Microcystis*

As in previous years, the Lower Vasse River has experienced a blue-green algae bloom. The bloom commenced late December and samples showed that the cyanobacterial density was above the recommended ARMCANZ Recreational Contact Guidelines.

The Shire of Busselton Health Officers have ensured that signs are erected around the Lower Vasse River warning people of the health risk associated with coming into contact with the waterbody.

GeoCatch and the Department of Environment are continuing to monitor the Vasse River and surrounding waterways and collect samples for elevated algal densities. Phoslock trials are also underway in the river, an update of the results will be available in the next issue.

Long term management in the catchment will continue to address the issue of excess nutrients in the waterway. The support of all landholders will be required to reduce algal blooms



Stressing over fish...

The Department of Environment and GeoCatch are the lead agency for freshwater fish kill responses in the catchment, please report any fish kill incident or signs of fish under stress to this office on 97544331 or after hours Richard Pickett at Dept of Environment on 0417927438. Previously fish kill incidences have been associated with low dissolved oxygen in the water, but can be associated with pollution events so it is important that incidences of dead fish are recorded and logged.

Visit our web site www.geocatch.asn.au

Capel LCDC Update – Rae McPherson

Bundaberg Rum Landcare Australia Fund Success

The Capel Land Conservation District Committee (LCDC) has been successful in gaining almost \$5,000 to restore the wetland behind the Capel Country Club. The funding will be used to create a demonstration site showing how to replace weeds in the wetlands with native plants. The safe use of herbicides, weed control techniques, water quality sampling and native wetland vegetation will all be showcased in a workshop to be held as part of the project. *Boronia megastigma*, the highly scented brown boronia will be planted throughout this site along with other native wetland plants and trees. The larger trees will provide a windbreak and shade for the cricket oval. Like the Capel Drive bridge project the area will also form a seed bank where seed for future restoration projects will be grown.

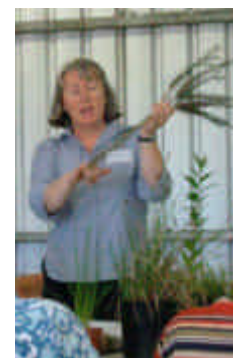


Left: A Portion of the Wetland area to undergo restoration

A Growing Interest in Native Plants

Boyanup Botanical Nursery and the Capel LCDC teamed up to run a workshop attended by more than 40 people on native plant propagation in Boyanup on 17 January. Information on how to collect native seed, break seed dormancy, potting mixes, non-wetting soils and growing native plants from cuttings were covered. By growing native plants the need for watering is reduced and the areas of habitat for our native wildlife is increased. Cherie Kemp from "Land for Wildlife" provided information on what to grow to help provide habitat for our native wildlife such as birds and small marsupials.

Below (left) Boyanup Botanical's Cathy Dixon demonstrating native plant propagation methods. Below (right) Rae McPherson demonstrating native seed collection methods.



Fish Survey and Water Quality sampling at Cobblers Pools – Sussex LCDC

Cobblers Pools once formed part of the Buayanup River. The Pools were a renowned source of Cobbler many years ago. There are two pools that contain permanent water which have become degraded from unlimited stock access. Following discussions with the landholder and the Sussex LCDC, a project was developed with the aim to restore health to these pools through fencing and revegetation of the area.

A funding application will be lodged with Envirofund for the fencing and revegetation of the area. The restoration of Cobblers Pools is a priority project identified in the Sussex LCDC's 2003/04 Business Plan. As part of this project we identified a need to establish if cobbler still exist in the Pools. Fish and macro invertebrate sampling of the Pools took place on the 9 December. Although cobbler were found to no longer inhabit the pools, a long necked turtle was observed, (see picture).



For more information on the project contact Kate Reading on 9755 4012 or Cassandra Jury at the GeoCatch office.

GeoCatch, The community's voice in the catchment

Unit 2 Palm Court Arcade, 62 Kent Street Busselton
PO Box 269 Busselton WA 6280
Phone (08) 9754 4331 Fax (08) 9754 4335

FUNDING UPDATE

Envirofund Success for Sabina River Demonstration Site

Successful Envirofund Round 1 2003/2004 projects were announced on the 28 November 2003. The Geographe Catchment Council secured \$6,591 for on ground works at the Sabina River Restoration Demonstration Site. The money will be used for the revegetation of a 500metre section of the river and erosion control measures.

Other successful community projects across the catchment were:

- **Peppermint Grove Beach Community Association** – secured \$7 495 to complete vegetation surveys of the Peppermint Grove Beach dunal system, contact Shelly Voigt on 9727 2662 for more information
- **Toby Inlet Catchment Group** - \$22 676 to install biological filters within the catchment to control nutrients. Contact Brian Clay TIC 9755 3384

The Cape to Cape Catchment group were also successful in obtaining \$25,927 for Coordinated Weed Control and Strategic Revegetation on the Margaret River. Contact Tracey Gregory or Kay Lehman at the Cape to Cape office on 9780 5231 for more information.



Coastwest Grants 2004

Application forms are currently available for funding from the State Government's Coastwest program, applications are due 27 February 2004.

The Coastwest competitive grants program is designed to improve the condition and amenity of the coastal zone in Western Australia. The funds are used for on-ground works aimed at maintaining partnerships between local coastal managers and the community.

Jason Smith, the South West Regional Coastcare facilitator said "there will be a good chance that well developed coastal or marine projects with clear environmental benefits will be funded through the Coastcare program" Jason will also be available to assist people with applications for the Coastcare funds.



Projects will need to address one or more of the objectives of the Coastwest grants program.

1. Contribute to the implementation of local and regional coastal plans and strategies.
2. Assist in the identification, protection and/or maintenance of environmental values, aesthetic qualities, biodiversity and water quality in the coastal zone.
3. Foster sustainable recreational and tourist use of the coast by assisting in the maintenance of the recreational amenity and provision of public access to the coast.
4. Build capacity in Western Australian communities to increase their involvement in coastal zone management activities by supporting coastal zone research, education and training

Applications for Coastwest funds can be completed on-line via the WA Planning Commission website: www.wapc.wa.gov.au Or by contacting Jason Smith the South West Regional Coastcare facilitator (08) 9725 5921.

Capel LCDC - Property Planning Workshop Saturday 28 February 2004

Do you have a block of land or farm over 10 acre and would like some assistance to put together a property plan?

Then you would benefit from attending the FarmBiz accredited Property Planning Workshop being sponsored by the Capel LCDC

The cost will be \$120 per property and this will get you:

- A laminated A3 colour aerial photo of the property plus overlays and pens
- A 90 page property planning manual
- 7 hours of guidance and assistance by a property planning consultant
- lunch morning and afternoon tea included

To register contact Rae McPherson on 9731 2074 or via e-mail on landcare@capel.wa.gov.au By 9 February 2004

The Dept of Environment presents...

On the Move - A guide to new environmental legislation

11 February 2004

St Mary's Community Hall

10:00am - 12:30pm Community Update

1:30pm - 4:30pm Update for businesses
and local Government Departments

FUNDING APPLICATION CLOSING DATES

| | |
|-------------|------------------------------|
| January 30 | Envirofund - round two 03/04 |
| February 27 | Coastcare Funding Closes |
| March 19 | Trails Grant Program |
| March 31 | Fishcare Funding Closes |
| May 10 | Bundaberg Rum Bushcare Grant |
| TBA | Community Facilities Grants |

Business Planning Newsflash

The recently updated draft South West Regional Natural Resource Management Strategy will be released for formal public comment for six weeks commencing in March this year. Concurrent with the comment period for the strategy will be a call for expressions of interest for projects for inclusion in a three-year investment plan (funding bid).

The investment plan will be prepared for the whole of the South West Region and, following accreditation of the regional strategy, will be the primary vehicle for groups to access State and Commonwealth funding for projects (excluding the Envirofund).

For further information regarding the investment plan or draft regional strategy please contact Kirrily White, Geographe – Capes Natural Resource Management Officer on 9754 4331

New addition to the Lower Vasse River...

Next time you go for a walk along the lower Vasse River following the interpretive signs... and LISTEN... There are two new stations next to the frog and bird sign which have special sound devices fitted so you can press a button and listen to the sounds of native frogs or birds...

Then listen out for the real bird and frog calls!



Conserving Biodiversity Values of the Abba Plains

John McKinney has recently been contracted to GeoCatch to continue the implementation of the Abba Plains Biodiversity Project. This project was developed in response to the Remnant Vegetation Strategy for the Geographe Bay Catchment, which identified Abba Plains vegetation complexes as being seriously depleted and fragmented, and a priority for active management.

The Abba Plains covers most of the coastal plain portion of the Geographe Bay catchment. Less than 10% of vegetation remains on the Abba Plains and as low as 3% remains for some vegetation communities. The Abba Plains includes 5 Threatened Ecological Communities, including the critically endangered Southern Ironstone community, and many priority plant species. 99% of remnant Abba Plains vegetation is situated on private land, and so it is essential that GeoCatch work closely with landholders to achieve conservation and enhancement. The objectives of the project are:

1. Raise community awareness, appreciation and recognition of Abba Plains/Flats vegetation.
2. Determine priority areas and linkages of Abba Flats vegetation, and opportunities for enhancement.
3. Provide support and resources to landholders to protect and enhance remnant stands and linkages.

John will work closely with individual landholders to develop on-ground conservation and enhancement projects. If you have remnant Abba Plains vegetation on your land and would like assistance to protect and manage it, or to establish linkages between patches of remnant bushland, please contact John on 9755 5245 or Annaleisha Sullivan at GeoCatch on 9754 4331.



Green Corps teams for Greater Busselton Area

Greening Australia was successful in applying for a Green Corps Team during 27 January to 23 July 2004 for the greater Busselton area. They will be assisting a number of community groups with planning and on ground environmental works, including the Capel LCDC, Meelup Regional Park Management Committee, CALM/ Friends of Cape to Cape, GeoCatch and Dunsborough Coast and Landcare Group.

Projects such as track upgrades, seedling planting, river restoration, weed management and flora surveys. A team will also be operating in the Margaret River area.

EVENTS CALENDAR

| | |
|---|----------------|
| World Wetlands Day | 2 February |
| DairyCatch Talk | 6 February |
| On the Move Briefings | 11 February |
| Property Planning Workshop Capel | 28 February |
| Wetland Interpretive Centre Workshop | February (TBA) |
| Cleanup Australia Days | |
| • Business Clean up Day | 2 March |
| • Schools Clean Up Day | 5 March |
| • Clean Up Australia Day | 7 March |



River Action Plans – Gynudup Brook and Tren Creek

A River Action Plan for Gynudup Brook and Tren Creek River was successfully launched on Saturday 13 December 2003 in Capel. This Action Plan, commissioned by the Capel LCDC with funding from the National Heritage Trust, Iluka Resources and the Shire of Capel, provides a detailed assessment of the current health of the foreshores of Gynudup Brook and Tren Creek.

It also outlines a series of detailed management recommendations that can be implemented to improve the health of these waterways.

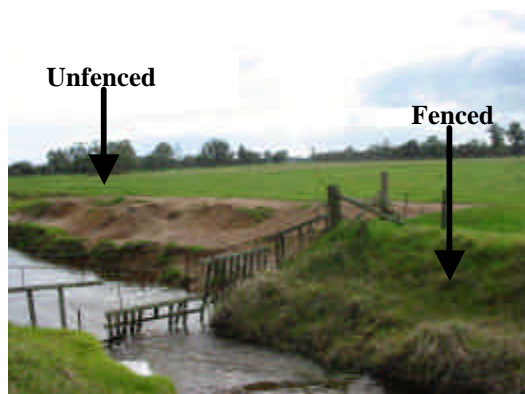
Some of the more serious issues in the catchment include:

- loss of native fringing vegetation
- unrestricted stock access
- weed invasion
- erosion

Over the next few years, a series of projects will be implemented to address these issues through fencing, stock exclusion, revegetation and erosion control.



John McKinney, Beth Golden (Capel LCDC), Ian Watson (Rehabilitation Superintendent Iluka Resources), Rae McPherson



John McKinney has been contracted to coordinate these projects. If you would like to be involved or have more information, please contact John on 9755 5245 or the GeoCatch office.

An example of an area that has been fenced (foreground) compared to an area that is unfenced (background) allowing stock access.

Dairy Catch Update

DairyCatch was launched on 9 December 2003 in Harvey at Dale Hanks' dairy farm by Paul Omedei. Over 100 people attended the launch which included three discussion groups about effluent plans, on-site water quality monitoring and centre pivot irrigation.

Dairy farmers are now eligible to receive subsidised best practice effluent plans. The plans are developed one-on-one with farmers by waste management specialist Tom Long (who worked with 38 farmers in the Vasse region last year). Some additional funds for plan implementation are also available. To date 38 farmers have registered for a plan and nine plans have been completed already. *Contact GeoCatch for further information.*

Lessons from the Murray Darling “Dairy Farming without footprints”

Western Dairy proudly presents a morning with Kevin Goss, the general manager for natural resources with the Murray Darling Basin Commission. Kevin has over-seen the management strategies to ensure dairy farming can co-exist with best practice catchment management.

While we don't have a Murray Darling river system in WA, we can certainly learn from their experiences to ensure that as dairy farmers we are pro-active environmental managers as opposed to reactive.

When: **Friday 6 February**
Time: 10.00am for a 10.30am sharp start
Where: Geographe Bayview Resort, Busselton
Cost: Complimentary to all dairy farmers and dairy service providers

10.30am Lessons from the Murray Darling – Kevin Goss
11.45am DairyCatch – a progress report – Sasha Taylor
12pm Picnic lunch (available for purchase at Geographe Bayview Resort for \$12.50)
12.30pm Visit to Michael MacDonald's dairy – a DairyCatch monitor farm – to inspect effluent planning systems provided by Effluent specialist Tom Long
2.00pm Close

RSVP'S to Esther Price by Monday February 2

Tel: 08 9525 2663; Fax: 9525 2532; esther@estherprice.com.au





FEATURE PLANT – *Beaufortia squarrosa* Sand Bottlebrush (southern)

This plant brightens up the summer bush where it grows profusely. The shrub grows to 3m with flowers that are *red* in colour. A few places it can be viewed over the next couple of months is on Tompsett and Oates Rd corner or continue on Tompsett Rd almost to Claymore Rd, and on the Nannup Rd at the top of the Whicher Scarp.



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

Marron Season Opens

Michael Burgess, Community Education Officer - Southern Region, Department of Fisheries

The 2004 Marron Season runs from midday 23rd January 2004 until midday 8th February 2004. A license of is required and is available from Department of Fisheries offices, Australia Post or online at www.fish.wa.gov.au

This year the Daily bag limit in most areas is set at 10 per person - midday to midday. The minimum carapace size is 76mm and fishers are urged to find out from the Department of Fisheries what gear restrictions apply or closed areas apply to their fishing location.

An important reminder is that the Margaret River is a snare only area. The river is closed to Marron fishing 50 metres either side of the Bussell Hwy traffic bridge and closed upstream of 10 Mile Brook junction including all tributaries (this includes areas such as Canebrake Pool). The closure upstream is to prevent any fishing of the native threatened Margaret River 'hairy' Marron.

Further information and advice can be obtained by calling the Busselton District office on 97522152. Any illegal fishing activity can be reported through FishWatch on 1800 815 507.

Hal's Weed Spot

A Proposed Regional Model for Better Declared Animal and Plant Control

The Agriculture Protection Board (APB) Chairman and the Department of Agriculture (DAWA) are seeking stakeholder input into proposed changes for declared animal and weed control in WA.

The details of the proposed changes are contained in a discussion paper produced in December 2003. The paper discusses a coordinated regional approach for pest and weed control with a balance between regulatory and non-regulatory solutions, shared responsibility for funding and increased local decision making.

A regionally based management framework is suggested based on NRM regional boundaries. The possible regional model will see all private landholders contributing to pest management through a compulsory funding contribution. The State Government would match the funds raised by the local communities and fully fund the cost of control on Government land. The result of the combined new landholder/Government funding of approximately \$6 million would result in 40 new staff being appointed to regionally managed pest control roles.

If you would like to receive a copy of the discussion paper or make a submission contact Richard Walker on 08 9368 3830 or e-mail rwalker@agric.wa.gov.au

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SHIRE OF BUSSELTON



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Toby Inlet Foreshore Management

At the request of the Toby Inlet Catchment Group, GeoCatch organised a gathering of key stakeholders with an interest in the management of Toby Inlet held on 17 December 2003.

The Shire of Busselton is currently seeking vesting of the Toby Inlet Foreshore. In partnership with the community, GeoCatch and TIC, the Shire would like to develop a Foreshore Management Plan which will guided activities on the Toby Inlet foreshore. After discussion it was resolved that an application be made to 03/04 Envirofund Round 2, to identify a timeframe, responsible parties, community consultation plan, revegetation plan and how to fund the publishing of a Management Plan.

What's happening in the Toby Inlet Catchment in 2004...

Envirofund. The TIC Group have received a grant for \$22,676.00 from Envirofund round 1 to 'install biological filters within the catchment to control nutrients' The money will be used in the following projects:

1. The Vintner's Ridge – Public Open Space project.

With Paul Cook, the developer, TIC will revegetate the confluence of Tranquil and Clark Creek. Restoration of riparian vegetation along the creeks will occur. Some of the funds will also be used to assist the developer with rehabilitation of a gravel extraction site. An estimated 7000 plants are to be used in this portion of the project.

2. Shire Heritage Reserve.

A reserve exists where the tram used to carry logs to Quindalup (on Caves road to the edge near the fauna park boundary). The project will replant the wetland foreshore with riparian vegetation and trial direct seeding of understorey areas.

Shire Reserves - Creekview and Hayes. Two gravel extraction sites have been rehabilitated by TIC and will shortly have signs for dual-purpose walk trails and fire access.

Weeds. The weed program will be continued, and any Catchment Landholders that require help with equipment and herbicide, can contact Brian Clay on 9755 3384. TIC is keen to get as many land holders involved as possible. The 2003 program was a great success with 80 persons using the equipment and herbicides to tackle the weed problem. We need to keep the pressure on the weeds so as to ensure that we have some form of control. Weeds such as Gladiolus, Bridal Creeper appear to be spreading.

Shire Reserve A 46. It is hoped that the Management Plan for this Reserve will pass through Council shortly. This plan will be part of the foreshore management plan for the Inlet as the Reserve is bordered by the sea to the north and the south by Toby Inlet.

2003 TIC Christmas BBQ

The annual Christmas BBQ held by the Toby Inlet Catchment Group at the end of November, was a great success, with some 100 members attending. Mongrel Creek wine was donated by Shirley and Larry Schoppe of Hayes Road. The wine was much appreciated Ben O'Grady and Letisha Newman produced an information stand on projects by the Water Corporation. Ben also kindly assisted with a projector enabling TIC to promote the Cape Naturaliste Herbarium CD. As a result several copies were sold. Thank you to Ben and Letisha for their contribution.

Glen Watts is thanked for the work he did to ensure the venue was a success and thanks go out to all the other members that gave their time

Stirling Wetlands – and the future upgrade of the Capel Weir

GeoCatch organised a meeting in November of landholders around the Stirling Wetlands near Capel to provide support communication between landholders and to improve our understanding of the history behind the "swamp area" near Peppermint Grove Beach.

Peter McCleery, Water Corporation provided preliminary designs for the upgrade of the Capel Weir scheduled for 04/05. Landholders provided comment on the designs, information on the water requirements of the nearby landholders, historical information on the operation of the weir and on water releases to the wetlands.

An action from the meeting is to develop with landholders a questionnaire to gain further historical and current information on the water use, drainage and wetlands in the area.

The information gathered will provide direction for local management of the Wetlands. This will help with communications on releases of water from the drop-gates and future management of the wetlands. Further information is available from Annaleisha Sullivan at GeoCatch.



Water Corporations inflatable weir... a first for WA, being tested on the Capel River. It will be used to manage the flows next year during the weir replacement.