

Ear to the Ground

Landcare Education Newsletter

Issue 13

May 2005

Welcome to Ear to the Ground, the Department of Education and Training's Landcare Education newsletter. Ear to the Ground will provide you with information about up-coming events, resources and issues in landcare and landcare education.

The promise of cooler weather provides a myriad of opportunities to delve into on-ground activities to complement your in-class studies. Why not adopt a local area to manage and conserve as a class or whole school. It's a great opportunity to involve the community in your school projects.

Please pass this newsletter on to any teachers in the learning areas of Society and Environment, Science, or any staff member interested in the environment and environmental education.

Patricia Dames

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TALEC Celebrates 15 Years

Long-standing partnerships between Alcoa World Alumina Australia, the Shire of Tammin, Dept. of Education and Training, Dept. of Agriculture, South Tammin Catchment Group and Tammin community members was celebrated earlier this month with the Tammin Alcoa Landcare Education Centre (TALEC) celebrating 15 years of providing innovative landcare education opportunities for teachers, students and community members throughout WA and across Australia.

Joan Button, Chair, TALEC Management Committee, said that the aim of the landcare program is to engage students in landcare through hands-on activities that lead to increased awareness of environmental responsibility.

What started 15 years ago as a unique landcare education project has become an environmental learning experience of a lifetime, catering to thousands of students, teachers, and community members who have a passion to learn more about their land.

The first school education centre set up in WA, TALEC has been used as a model to set up similar programs around Australia. "The TALEC program can document many achievements including visits from neighboring, interstate and international groups and experts, winning the National Westpac Landcare Education Award in 2001, and continuous strong partnerships with various community, government and non-government organisations' said Mrs Button.

"The environment is our future," Mrs Button said. "By educating people about land degradation and its consequences we can bring a new level of knowledge and understanding into future generations and hopefully we will become a society dedicated to preventing environmental problems."

Adventures in Landcare

2005 Landcare Education Field Study Courses

Practical courses are offered to people who have a passion about landcare. Using hands-on activities and a variety of site visits this course provides insight into landcare practices being used in wheatbelt Western Australia to address a range of environmental issues.

Courses are residential with accommodation, catering, field transport and resources provided for a cost of \$77 per person (including GST).

Dates for 2005 include

12-14 May

16-18 June

30 June - 1 July

18-20 August

15-16 September

13-14 October

Courses are run from the Tammin Alcoa Landcare Education Centre in Tammin, Western Australia. For further information contact Patricia Dames, on 9622 0200, or Patricia.Dames@det.wa.edu.au

Lord of the Weeds

Schools Competition

Design a strategy to manage weeds in your school or local area! Weeds CRC has designed this competition to enable students to develop a sense of ownership and pride in their school environment/local area by designing solutions to identified problems. Be in the running to win \$1000 for your school. For further information contact Susanna Greig on (02) 6773 2809 or susanna.greig@une.edu.au. Or check out the website at www.weeds.crc.org.au/education_training/school_resources.html. All entries are due by 24 May 2005 and reports due by 6th August 2005.

Cockatoo Care

The sound of black cockatoos echoing throughout the sky is one which residents of Perth are all too familiar with - rain is on its way, the rainbirds are here!

These magnificent cockatoos grace our south-west forests and play an important role in maintaining biodiversity in these ecosystems. Unfortunately, due to the extensive rate of land clearing resulting in the loss of habitat, competition for nesting hollows by feral bees, poaching and shooting by some orchardists, numbers of these endangered birds are dwindling.

The Cockatoo Care program, a joint initiative between the Water Corporation and the Western Australian Museum focuses on protecting the three species of black cockatoos endemic to the south-west of Western Australia - Carnaby's Cockatoo, Baudin's Cockatoo and the Forest Red-tailed Black Cockatoo.

The foundation of the Cockatoo Care program is supporting the Western Australian Museum's research on the black cockatoos, community education and involvement providing opportunities for observing the birds in the wild, habitat enhancement and investigation of feral bee control methods.

You can help by

- Filling out a frequent sighting form or observation card.
- Protecting your local bushland and large trees, especially veteran and stag trees
- Using firewood sparingly and buying renewable timber

For more information contact a Cockatoo Care Officer on 9420 2182 or visit our web site at www.cockatoocare.com.

Professional Development Opportunities

Threatened Animals and Ecosystems: Tuart woodlands - Learn about the relationships between soils, plants and animals and experience hands-on Western Shield research techniques. Discover threats to the biodiversity of tuart woodlands on the Swan Coastal Plain and how you and your students can contribute to their conservation. Workshop runs from 8:30am-3:00pm on Friday 27th May 2005, at the Henderson Environmental Centre, Groat Street, North Beach. Level: K-12. Max participants: 20. Cost: Teachers \$55, Pre-service \$33 (inc. lunch, resources and animal encounter). To register, phone 9295 6149 or 9295 6300, or email ecoeducation@calm.wa.gov.au. Hosted by Greening Australia (WA) and CALM's *Western Shield* program.

Naragebup's Sustainable Living Workshops - Embark on your own personal journey towards a more sustainable lifestyle to improve your quality of life, save money and shrink your ecological footprint. Learn hot tips to slash your energy costs, set up a greywater recycling system, or perhaps you'd like to grow your own food or create a backyard wildlife oasis? Plus expert workshops on other great topics! For further information, download a brochure from the Naragebup website at <http://www.naragebup.org.au/index.php?PageID=29> or call Naragebup on 9591 3077.

Landcare Education Website

The Department of Education and Training's Landcare Education Program provides information on land degradation issues, management options, PD opportunities and resources related to landcare education. For information to assist with your activities visit our website at <http://www.eddept.wa.edu.au/deo/midlands/index.htm>

Be a Nature Conservation Officer for a Night - overnight camp at The Hills Forest Discovery Centre - Monitor and have close encounters with our amazing native fauna. Check out resources that contribute to Curriculum Framework outcomes. Target Audience: Secondary teachers - Science, Society & Environment. Primary teachers - all Learning Areas. Limited places for other Environmental Educators.

When: 20 May to 21 May, Time: 5.00 pm Friday to 12.30 pm Saturday, Cost: \$55/teacher (inc GST) (inc accommodation, meals, resources), \$44 (inc GST) - STAWA members special. For bookings phone 9295 6149 or email ecoeducation@calm.wa.gov.au

Fire: Facts, Fiction and Fun Tour - FREE workshop - Attention teachers all learning areas! Want to educate students about the effects of wildfires, the Perth Hills January wildfire, and the complex nature of fire management, prescribed burning and the use of geographical information systems (GIS) to fight fires? Classroom resources and lunch provided. When Saturday 28 May from 9am - 3pm. For enquiries and bookings phone 9295 6149, fax 9295 3247 or email ecoeducation@calm.wa.gov.au. This course is also being offered on Saturday 30 July.

Inaugural NRM Conference for WA

Landcare is giving way to natural resource management with the inaugural WA State Conference on Natural Resource Management to be held in October this year. Hosted by the Denmark Centre for Sustainable Living (managed by Green Skills Inc.) and the WA College of Agriculture the conference will also incorporate the State Landcare Awards.

Landcare on the Web

Science Network WA

Provides news about science, science research, educational resources, funding opportunities, science links and a science calendar of events. Subscribe to receive regular email updates.

<http://www.sciencewa.net.au>

Bushfire and Hydrology Website

Developed by CRC for Catchment Hydrology this site provides information to assist land and water managers in impact assessment and rehabilitation planning for waterways impacted by bushfire.

<http://www.catchment.crc.org.au/>

Australian Forest Grower

This website provides information on farm and agro-forestry, a reference library and access to a regular Australian Forest Grower newsletter.

<http://www.afg.asn.au>

Virtual habitats!

Uses animation, graphics and text to introduce students to the major habitats found on the Swan Coastal Plain and the Darling Range.

<http://www.growusahome.org.au>

The Tammin Alcoa Landcare Education Program is proudly supported by ~



WA Schools Environmental Education for Sustainability Awards

The Department of Environment would like to recognise the great work of teachers and students for a better environment by inaugurating the Western Australian Schools Environmental Education for Sustainability Awards. These awards have been developed to enhance opportunities to recognise excellence in environmental education implemented in schools, and recognise a wide range of activities within schools at an individual, group, class or whole school level. Win cash prizes! Registrations close on 1 July 2005, and nominations must be received by September 23, 2005. For further information contact Ms Joey King on 9278 0679 or visit the website at <http://community.environment.wa.gov.au>

Dates to Remember

- ◆ **9-15 May** National Volunteer Week
- ◆ **22 May** International Day for Biological Diversity
- ◆ **30 May - 17 June** Saltwatch
- ◆ **5 June** World Environment Day
- ◆ **8 June** World Oceans Day

For further information contact...

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