

Narputungup ews

November
Number 4 2014

from the Friends of the Fitzgerald River National Park

www.fitzgeraldfriends.org.au

2015 AGM 11 & 12 APRIL AT QUAALUP. DETAILS IN FEB. ISSUE

WHAT YOU'VE BEEN WAITING FOR -TWERTUP UPDATE

Events at Twertup have been barrelling along this year. The rain has behaved, with Twertup Track remaining open for most working bees, and it has rapidly filled the water tanks with clean water. The cunning design of the concrete tank's roof has filtered the water and kept the bees out - well done Ric Pepper.

The tenders for erecting the walls attracted two quotes (out of six requested), one from Esperance and the other from Capel. Paul Young travelled from the west coast to start work in late September and continued building the walls for the following three weeks, making impressive progress during that time. Not really knowing what to expect at Twertup, Paul was stunned by the beautiful scenery, especially the positioning of his accommodation (the caravan) to take in the superb views.

A major logistical nightmare was the organising of trucks, loaders and drivers to move ten pallets of spongolite blocks from both 'Yarrabee' (near the Stirling Ranges) and Ravensthorpe, to arrive on the same morning at Twertup for unloading. Our thanks to Kingsley Vaux (driver), the Campbell family (truck), Martin Guest (loader) and Bill Thompson for moving the 'Yarrabee' blocks which were donated by Greening Australia (WA) and Bush Heritage. The 'Ravensthorpe' blocks were donated and stacked on pallets by Ron Richards and Rosemary Jasper, loaded using a bobcat from Coates Hire onto a truck donated by John Mason (CPC Engineering, Ravensthorpe), then carted by Ric Pepper. At Twertup, Malcolm Smith came with his truck and tractor and very efficiently unloaded the 20 pallets. Many thanks to all involved.

Numerous helpers have visited Twertup recently, with a weekend of cleaning and moving the spongolite blocks closer to Paul's work area, plus making a couple of window and door frames. The Twertup stone is being used to build the outside walls, while the more evenly sized and paler blocks from Yarrabee and Ravensthorpe are being used for the internal walls. The men, with much discussion and muscle-straining, positioned the 'fossil wall' in a new location in the pantry/living room wall.

If all goes to plan, the walls may be finished by the end of November, just in time to acquit our *State NRM grant* which is part-paying for the stonemason, along with the *Foundation for National Parks and Wildlife grant*. If you would like to come to Twertup and assist with the rebuilding of the Field Studies Centre, please contact Steve Janicke on 0467 077 749 or steve@janicke.com.au All monetary donations are gratefully received.



Next issue:
February 2015



Stonemason Paul Young lays the first block



Ron Richards and Ric Pepper assemble the windows



Many hands make light work. The original fossil wall from the 1980 renovation is manoeuvred into place. See comment at end of article.



Libby Sandiford and Peter Dawson start on the east wall



Fun times—Rosemary Jasper, Jane Thompson and Gil Craig clean and sort spongolite blocks



The coloured stone work is indeed a work of art

Article and photographs by Gil Craig

The fossil wall was created as part of the 1980 renovation. It came about by the discovery that many of the spongolite blocks had internal fossils. This led to a fossil hunt by children. Heath

Bradby, Alison and Peter Lullfitz were active participants. Fossil bearing blocks were mortared together to form part of the repaired east external wall. The fossils included banksia like leaves, worm tubes, bivalves, corals and echinoderm spines; a record of the flora and fauna here between 20 to 40 million years ago. *Editor.*

AGRICULTURAL PUSH REVISITED – YOU'D BETTER BELIEVE IT!

Since at least June this year various State Government Ministers, public servants, and local government officials have been working on a proposal to extend agricultural land in the Esperance and Ravensthorpe Shires, mainly into the Great Western Woodlands. The proposal was raised with the Premier and State Cabinet at a Cabinet meeting in Esperance in June and since then a group of officials have been vigorously developing the idea. It is likely to officially emerge as part of the Esperance Regional Economic Development Strategy which is yet to be published, but which has been drafted.

The concept has been developed to the extent that certain areas have been notionally designated as potential areas for agricultural expansion. These total some 500,000 ha, plus additional areas north of Salmon Gums. At a finer scale at least two areas have been suggested as 'pilots' to begin with, and farms of ~2000 ha. have been proposed. The Department of Regional Development and the Shires of Esperance and Ravensthorpe appear to be driving the proposal

There have been at least two newspaper reports relating to this *Farm Weekly*, 19/7/14, "Esperance land release proposal" and *The West Australian*, 8/8/14, "Clear run for new farmland", otherwise it has been kept as quiet as possible. While publicly it has been called a draft proposal, documents obtained through Freedom of Information show that considerable planning is already underway.

Members of the Friends of the Fitzgerald who wish to take action on this matter are encouraged to write to the Premier, your local member of Parliament, and/or the Shires of Esperance and Ravensthorpe.

Contributed by Rosemary Jasper

WHEN IS A JELLYFISH NOT A JELLYFISH?

When it is a plastic bag masquerading as a tasty morsel beloved by some turtle species.

This is one of the things that senior room students from the Bremer Bay and Gairdner Primary Schools learned in a recent workshop series on the impact of plastics on our marine life. The workshops, coordinated by the Friends of the Fitzgerald River National Park, took place in August and September over three days.

On the first day, Friends Vice President Anne Gadsby, myself, and WA Seabird Rescue volunteers Sue Gleave (who specialises in rehabilitating turtles) and Carol Biddulph (whose specialty is rehabilitating marine birds), made presentations to the students. We then went out to Bremer Bay's Main Beach in search of marine debris.

While removing it from the beach was one objective, the other was to use the rubbish to make an art installation.

Wellstead-based art teacher, Margaret Gorman, came on board for this next stage. The students each made their own turtles and decorated them, and four larger paper-mache turtles. The plastic rubbish collected became the marine environment - convincingly representing seagrasses and jellyfish.

Two art installations were created using the beautifully bejewelled turtles and their deceptively attractive plastic dinner. One is set up at the Bremer Bay Primary School, the other at Gairdner Primary School.

The students also drew up posters about the problems caused by 'plastic oceans'. We hope to be able to place one of the installations in a public place in Bremer Bay over summer to help spread awareness of this issue, and to encourage people to pick up the rubbish they see on our beaches.

Special thanks to volunteers Sue Gleave and Carol Biddulph from WA Seabird Rescue for travelling to Bremer Bay for the day to tell the students about their work, and to Margaret Gorman for her wonderful enthusiasm and for bringing the student's artwork to life so brilliantly. Thanks also to Anne Gadsby, and the teachers and principals of the Gairdner and Bremer Bay Primary Schools for their encouragement and support of the project.

Finally, this project could not have been conducted without the generous financial support of South Coast Natural Resource Management.

**THIS PROJECT
PROUDLY SUPPORTED
BY....**



Above: Bremer Bay marine debris art installation

Above right: On the beach with Carol Biddulph, Sue Gleave, Anne Gadsby, Shona Richter, Lachlan Murdoch and Dominique Morgan.

LATE NEWS

The Carnaby's Cockatoo nesting survey which was cancelled due to 106 mm rain in Ravensthorpe has been re-scheduled for 21 & 22 November. Contact John Tucker 98383285 to participate.



Two ailing turtles found on the beach in Bremer Bay by Friend's Vice President Anne Gadsby last summer became the opening chapter in a sobering tale about the insidious impact of plastics on marine life.

One of the turtles found by Anne, a Green Sea Turtle, died of unknown causes. The other, a small Loggerhead, returned to good health following a period of care, including a diet of real turtle food - shellfish, and other invertebrates - and after managing to pass some blue plastic and fishing line poo!

As Anne, and then the rest of us, would learn, mistakenly taking in plastic as food is by no means uncommon, nor is it a problem limited to turtles. Many marine species, including birds such as shearwaters and penguins, are now feeding on plastics discarded as rubbish, or becoming entangled or suffocated in plastics or ropes, and dying as a result. Unfortunately there is a more insidious aspect to this problem, according to a Catalyst program entitled 'Plastic Oceans' which aired on the ABC in September 2012. Plastics tend not to break down chemically. They break down physically into smaller and smaller pieces that can remain in the marine environment for decades. During this time they act as 'bio-magnifiers', attracting to them contaminants in the water to a point where the concentrations of those contaminants on the plastics can be significantly higher than in the surrounding water. Marine animals mistakenly eat the small plastic pieces and they in turn are eaten by the next predators up the food chain. Top order predators can ultimately consume prey with high concentrations of these contaminants. *Contributed by Leonie McMahon*

Post Print approved 100002092 Surface
Mail

*If undelivered please return to:
The Editor
Narpulungup News
PO Box 199
Ravensthorpe WA 6346*

Postage Paid

Friends of Fitzgerald River National Park PO Box 199, Ravensthorpe WA 6346