

ECA WA News

Quarterly newsletter of the Environmental Consultants Association (WA) Inc.

ISSUE 05 Spring 2013

People's Choice Winner of 2013 Photo Story



Congratulations to Matt Cann (AECOM) whose photograph 'Mt Matthew – a lone Acacia perspective' was voted the best Photo Story entry at the 2013 ECA WA AGM in August. Matt has scored himself a \$150 voucher. His stunning photo will feature on the cover of the 2014 Members Register and will also be the door prize for some lucky ECA member at the Consultants News Years Breakfast. Entries for the 2014 Photo Story are now open.

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ECA WA Inc meet on the third Monday of the month. Please contact committee members or Bec James if there is anything you would like to raise for discussion.

Summer ECA WA News

Summer ECA WA News contributions should be sent to ECA Editor

Jo Tregonning at
editoreca@iprimus.com.au

The contribution deadline will be advised in ECA weekly email updates.

ECA WA News is a quarterly publication of the Environmental Consultants Association (WA) Inc (ECA). It aims to inform members on the activities of the ECA and its members, events and training, and developments in the environmental industry.

The views and opinions expressed in ECA WA News are those of the article authors and do not necessarily reflect those of the ECA WA Inc..



NRM Journey By Anthony Robinson

Anthony grew up with an interest in the outdoors and particularly anything involved with rivers, beaches and water. It was a 'great fit' for him to complete his fourth year research project in the field of riparian ecology with assistance from the 2008 Ray Hart Memorial Scholarship.

Whilst studying to complete a Bachelor of Science in Natural Resource Management at the University of Western Australia I managed to convince Dr Pauline Grierson to take me on as part of her Ecosystems Research Group (ERG). In consultation with my supervisors Pauline, Rio Tinto Ecologist Sally Madden and Riparian Ecologist Dr Neil Pettit, we assessed the current patterns and distribution of dominant plant species and associated vegetation communities in relation to underlying environmental variables along Welli Wolli creek in the semi-arid Pilbara region of Western Australia.

I spent almost six weeks in the field collecting information on riparian vegetation and investigated relationships between channel morphology, soils and vegetation structure and composition. I collected and identified more than 100 plant species along eight transects at three sites along a downstream gradient of increasing water availability. Back at the ERG labs I assessed soil nutrients and particle size distributions.

This study found that structure and composition of riparian vegetation was variable along the length of the study area and within sites, responding to gradients in water availability and vertical gradients of disturbance. Channel morphology and geological substrate were co-dependent resulting in a highly heterogeneous soil environment across channel profiles, creating specific niche environments for riparian plant species, hence driving structure and composition of vegetation communities.

Climate change coupled with land use change is predicted to result in dramatic alterations to the hydro-geomorphic gradients that drive structure and composition of riparian vegetation in north-west Australia. Information from this study aids in linking the available knowledge of population structure and dynamics of



Measuring trunk diameter at breast height sometimes required a little flexibility.
Photo – Anthony Robinson

riparian vegetation communities in semi-arid landscapes, fundamental to the formation of effective management strategies.

I would like to sincerely thank the Hart family for their continued financial support of students at UWA. I was honoured and extremely grateful to receive the scholarship which was a huge benefit during both an extremely challenging and enjoyable year.

Since graduating from UWA I spent time working with botanical consultants Mattiske Consulting, forestry company Elementree Pty and then Strategen Environmental Consultants before the travel bug hit me. I was lucky enough to spend a year in the tropical paradise of Samoa as an Australian Youth Ambassador for Development. My role as a Sustainable Agriculture Development Officer with the Samoan Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries was both incredibly challenging and rewarding. It is an experience I would highly recommend and was both an amazing opportunity to explore another country and to develop personally and professionally.

Following my time in Samoa, I returned to WA for six months work as an onsite

Environmental Advisor for Magellan Metals in Wiluna. I then made a long-term move to Canada where I am currently completing a Master of Science in Forestry at the University of British Columbia. My research thesis focuses on the spread of mountain pine beetle into novel environments of western North America, including the previously unoccupied boreal forest. Mountain pine beetle is a major landscape disturbance agent and has eaten its way through more than 18 million hectares of forest in the region, driven by climate change and years of fire suppression. To date ecological, social and economic impacts are immense.



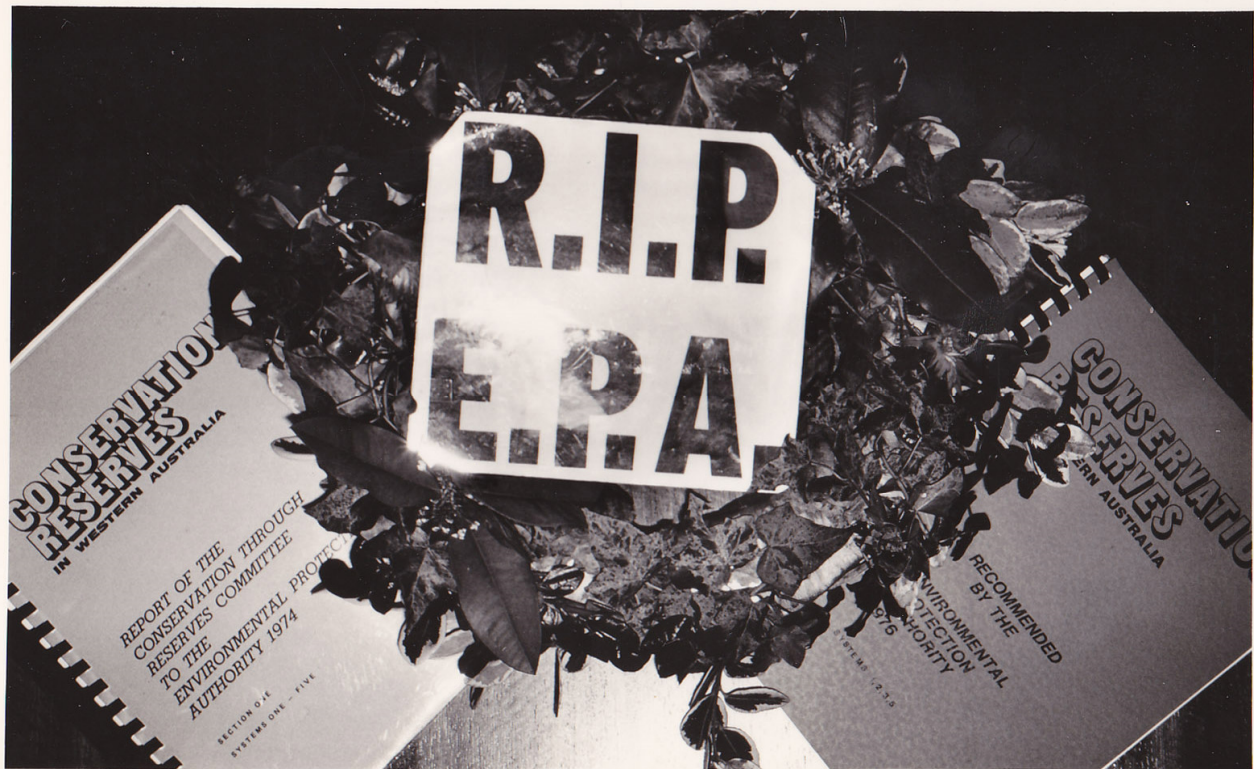
Relaxing in Weeli Wolli Creek after a hard day of field work.
Photo – Anthony Robinson

Ray Hart Memorial Scholarship

The Ray Hart Memorial Scholarship encourages and assists a deserving student to pursue field research in natural history.

If you would like to contribute to the scholarship fund you can download the donation form at www.eca.org.au.

Students requiring more information should contact Sophie Peoples on sophie.peoples@uwa.edu.au or 6488 8071.



PRESENTED TO DR BRIAN J. OBRIEN BY WACC 1976 re SHANNON

Photo Story: *This wreath was presented to me by a deputation from the WA Conservation Council in 1976 after a minor march up St Georges Terrace to my office in BP House. They were disquieted by our EPA Red Book detailed analyses and recommendations on Shannon River Drainage Basin promoted as an 'almost-virgin' forest. The five-year intensive review of parks and reserves throughout WA by independent leading scientists in many disciplines had written Green Books for community discussion, further consultation and review and then the EPA wrote Red Books for Cabinet submission containing hundreds of unprecedented recommendations which Cabinet endorsed. I accepted the wreath at the lift doors and said "I will table it at the next EPA meeting". Photo – Brian J. O'Brien*



Photo Story: *Probably the cutest animal to ever be trapped, the brush-tailed mulgara (*Dasycercus blythi*). Photo – J. Vos and Claire Brooks*

From Dawn to Dusk

By Guillaume Bouteloup (Phoenix Environmental Sciences)

Forestier Bay is one of those little-known dots on the Pilbara map surrounded by other locations with unpronounceable French names (history leftovers), where little (if no) data has been collected and where you have to be prepared for the unknown...

Anyway, we are here to survey the Bay for migratory shorebirds in response to a basic assessment of aerial imagery resulting in this simple equation: coastal Pilbara + extensive mudflats + mangroves + Australian summer = lots of migratory shorebirds. The survey is for a trestle jetty project for Rutila Resources (no dredging involved) designed to export iron ore offshore.



Bird count at dusk. Photo – Jarrad Clark

decision. The Bay is huge, the mangroves are impenetrable and a salt lake would stop any attempt to survey sites from the ground.

At dawn, we take off for a first peek in the Bay. We have to cover more than 50 km of coastline plus several islets. The purpose of the first flight is to locate where shorebirds assemble at high tide and get an estimation of the overall population. At this stage it won't be possible to identify most of them yet, but they can easily be separated from other types of birds such as gulls, terns or herons, and egrets that are also present in the area.

The environmental values of Forestier Bay are immediately striking. Numbers of migratory shorebirds are piling up on our field sheets very quickly. Between counts we spot several sharks at the embouchure of a large creek and as we fly over a long deserted beach marine turtles show up. We count nearly 200 of them gathering beside a four kilometre sandbar. Further up a manta ray makes an appearance, gently floating in a plain blue ocean between two islands. The count is over and the chopper is running low on fuel, time to head back to add up all the shorebird flocks. The total speaks for itself: an impressive 24,500 birds!

It appears imperative to get back on site for the next high tide, the most suitable moment to count shorebirds, as they are not spread out across the extensive mudflats. Now that we have located the main high-tide roost sites the job should be a little easier. But counting birds on the ground is a little more difficult than counting sheep. First you have to distinguish and separate species; and secondly you have to make sure you are not double counting them. In the meantime the temperature reaches mid-40°C, the wind drops, the flies and the mosquitoes make a feast of your exposed skin, the tide rises at walking pace and the mud soaks you in... Oh, and the sound of a thunderstorm reminds us that it's also the cyclone season.

The helicopter must be landed carefully, far away from roost sites to avoid flushing and disturbing the birds. The rest of the distance is covered by foot. The diversity of shorebirds is as good as the numbers were: impressive and rewarding.

As we arrive back to camp at dusk, with the buzzing noise of the chopper still persisting in our ears, our thoughts full of shorebirds; we just can't wait for "another day in the office".



Forestier Bay with Depuch Island in the background. Photo – Jarrad Clark

Given the lack of tracks, the large size of the bay and the nature of the substrate we opted for a helicopter. Once on site, we realise we definitely made the right

Below: Grey-tailed Tattler (Tringa brevipes). Photo – Jarrad Clark



Mixed flock of shorebirds, terns and gulls. Photo – Jarrad Clark

Updates on Reference Groups

Senior members continue to attend WA stakeholder reference group meetings on behalf of ECA (WA) members. If you have any queries or thoughts on what they could contribute please contact the relevant ECA representative.

EPA Stakeholder Reference Group

The bilateral agreement between the Commonwealth and the State of Western Australia relating to environmental assessment was re-signed in July. The bilateral agreement was amended to accredit assessment by public environmental review under the *Environmental Impact Assessment (Part IV Divisions 1 and 2) Administrative Procedures 2012 (WA)*, which replaced the 2010 procedures. The amendments also corrected some inconsistencies in references to the EPBC Act.

The Environmental Protection Authority recently undertook a tour of the Yilgarn Craton Banded Ironstone Formation (BIF) ranges and is considering its position on proposals that will have an impact on BIF.

Environmental Assessment Guidelines *EAG10 Scoping a Proposal* was released in August and is available at the EPA website. *EAG 11* is now in preparation and will focus on an approach to recommending conditions to ensure they are effective and enforceable.

The EPA is now working on an Environmental Protection Bulletin for Mine Closure, which will clarify the EPA's position on closure and seeks to remove duplication. Also of interest is the review to remove outdated policy statements and the duplication between various policies. The clean-up is scheduled for completion by the end of the year, but the overall review will take longer.

The offsets register is now live at www.offsetsregister.wa.gov.au.

For more information contact Barbara Brown (Sinclair Knight Merz) on 9469 4421 or BBrown@skm.com.au.

Environmental Regulation Stakeholder Reference Group

The next ERSRG meeting is scheduled for December. For more information contact Jamie Shaw (AECOM) on 6208 0199 or Jamie.Shaw@aecom.com.

WAMSI Dredging Science Node update

By Ian Le Provost

Dr Des Mills has recently been commissioned by WAMSI to conduct a review of available knowledge relevant to the WAMSI Dredging Science Node, Theme 2. The **focus of Theme 2** is on improving understanding and the capacity to quantify and predict the generation at source of the sediments produced by dredging activities. This is a pre-requisite for evaluating the scale and intensity of sediment plumes arising from dredging.

The **structure of the review** has been formulated in terms of six broad categories. Under each of these categories existing knowledge will be synthesized and gaps/needs identified. Briefly, these categories are:

1. Site characteristics;
2. Dredge-induced transformation and fate of material - at the seabed;
3. Dredge-induced transformation and fate of material - within the dredge plant;
4. Material released from (or re-suspension by) the dredge plant - near-field source terms;
5. Near-field dredge plume processes; and
6. Material released from the near-field as passive plumes – far-field source terms.

There are two components to the knowledge review that Des is conducting:

1. A review of the published scientific literature, available technical reports and datasets; and
2. A program of engagement with members of the dredging practitioner community with expertise relevant to Theme 2.

The first component is progressing well. **Progress to date** on the second component is as follows:

- a. A draft two-page introduction to the WAMSI DSN and specifically the focus of Theme 2 has been prepared with an invitation for participation of the dredging community;

- b. A draft survey questionnaire has been prepared and the respondents will be able to indicate if they want subsequent involvement, possibly in the form of interviews or small forums; and
- c. A draft contacts list has been prepared.

It is planned to distribute the questionnaires in early-mid October with a response date of mid-November 2013. A decision will be made about the value of follow up actions (e.g. small forums) once the questionnaire responses are in and have been evaluated. Any follow up will probably occur in early 2014. The final review report is due for submission for approval by WAMSI in mid-2014 and it is intended that the generic outcomes of the program of engagement would be included in that report.

The **ECA is assisting** Dr Mills by providing contacts from the dredging engineering and geotechnical areas, people who have some understanding about how material is modified as it is dredged and conveyed, and people with experience in measuring and estimating dredge spill.

If you have information or contacts that may be relevant to the study, and have not yet been contacted by Des, please feel free to contact him directly at desm3@iinet.net.au.

Strategic Assessment of the Perth and Peel Regions Stakeholder Reference Group

For more information please contact Jason Hick (Emerge Associates) on 9380 4988 or Jason.Hick@emergeassociates.com.au.

2013 ECA WA Annual General Meeting and Gala Dinner

Rydges Perth, 13 August 2013

Notes By Jo Tregonning



The Annual General Meeting and gala dinner for ECA (WA) Inc was held at the Rydges Perth. Attended by 73 members and guests, the evening was a wonderful opportunity to catch up with colleagues and meet many new people.

ECA President Ian Le Provost chaired the evening and gave the Presidents report, listing an impressive number of achievements by the ECA Committee. Thanks were extended to retiring committee members Charlie Welker, Anna Napier and Rob Holmes and Ian welcomed new member Matt Brooke. Ian announced his retirement in December 2013 with the position of President being taken up by Barbara Brown.

This year's Ray Hart Memorial Scholarship recipient is Ms Clodagh Guildea (UWA). Clodagh's research will investigate the extent of genetic introgression within the Critically Endangered hairy marron (*Cherax tenuimanus*) population of Margaret River.

Guest speaker, Griffin Longley, CEO Nature Play WA, gave an engaging talk full of thought-provoking statistics and stories about how children are spending less time outside in unstructured play. He illustrated how children's physical boundaries have shrunk and they have become confined to their own backyards and inside with digital media. Griff's talk certainly made me want to dash home and go for a picnic in the bush with my family. Nature Play have a number of initiatives such as 'family nature clubs' and 'passports to childhood' which aim to reconnect Australian children with nature. For more information visit www.natureplaywa.org.au/.



Top: Mat Brook (from left), Jo Browne and Keith Wallace .

Middle: Jess Delaney (from left), Michi Maier and Rachel Warner.

Middle: Helen Sutton (from left), Judy Ruppert, Sarah Marshman and Katherine Cox.

Below: Murray Ryall (from left), Chris McLoughlan, Mark Cusack and Anna Napier.



Top: Ian Le Provost (from left) and guest speaker Griffin Longley.

Middle: Jane Aberdeen (from left), Roz Hart and Lyn Le Provost.

Below: Ray Steedman (from left), Yvonne Vogel and Paul Vogel.

Coming Events for ECA WA Inc.

ECA Christmas Celebration

Wednesday 20 November 2013 from 5pm– 8pm

Zamia Café, Synergy Parkland . Kings Park and Botanic Garden

This event is free of charge. Please register through our website by Wednesday 13 November.

Consultants New Years Breakfast

Tuesday 4 February 2014

Burswood on Swan

For more information about this and other ECA events visit www.eca.org.au.

Photo Story

Congratulations to Matt Cann on his photo taking out the People's Choice at the 2013 ECA AGM. Submissions are now open for photo story entries. Have you taken a ripper photo and have a great yarn to tell about the photo? We'd like to hear from you!

Please send your photo and caption to Jo at editoreca@iprimus.com.au.

Mentoring for ECA Members

By Judith Ruppert
(360 Environmental)

YECA is happy to announce that a number of experienced consultants have volunteered to become mentors for younger ECA members.

YECA is currently in the process of assessing and sorting the mentors into different skill and expertise categories to facilitate the matching process. We will soon be sending out a call for applications from young 'enviros' wanting to learn about the skills and expertise offered by the mentors. Once the matching process has been completed, a kick-off event will be organised where mentors and mentees can meet for the first time.

The intention is for mentors to share their knowledge and consulting experience with less experienced ECA consultancy members, thereby helping to raise professional and technical standards. Mentoring is to be achieved through structured mentor programs and, group mentoring and one-on-one consultation.

For more information on upcoming events, the mentoring program or becoming a YECA member please email yeca@eca.org.au.

YECA Sundowner

By Adelaide Bevilaqua
(BMT Oceanica)

On 23 September the Young Environmental Consultants Association (YECA) held their second quarterly YECA Sundowner event.

The event was held at the upstairs function room of the Ellington Jazz Club, Perth. Considering the unpleasant weather on the night, there was an amazing turnout with more than 30 young consultants attending the event. As young consultants mingled and made new acquaintances Becc Sanderson, a local jazz act returning from Edinburgh, treated everyone to a performance.

The YECA committee hopes that everyone who came to the Sundowner enjoyed the evening. If there were consultants that attended the event who are not already ECA members but are interested in getting involved please email the committee on yeca@eca.org.au or visit the ECA website at www.eca.org.au for details on how to join.

YECA are currently planning their next event for November so stay tuned for more details.

Top: Penny Brooshooft (from left), Sheree Blechynden and friend. Photo – Adelaide Bevilaqua

Middle: Katharine Cox and Robert Thorne. Photo – Jeevarayan Rao

Bottom: Sally Ascott and Melanie Tapon. Photo – Jeevarayan Rao



Photo Story: *Amazing Pilbara landscape just before the rain came in. Photo – Claire Brooks (Biologic Environmental Surveys)*

Recent releases

New Australian Standard to Assist Management of Climate Change Risks
Standards Australia has released AS 5334-2013 *Climate change adaptation for settlements and infrastructure: a risk based approach*. The voluntary standard provides a general and widely applicable approach and framework for all organisations directly or indirectly involved in settlements and infrastructure. It also provides guidance on managing climate change risks and includes implementation plans for suitable and effective adaptation or treatment. To purchase a copy of the standard visit <http://infostore.saiglobal.com/store/Details.aspx?ProductID=1631218>

EPA Release EAG 10 & 11

The EPA recently released two new Environmental Assessment Guidelines EAG 10 – Scoping a proposal EAG 11 – Recommending environmental conditions
Download a copy at http://www.epa.wa.gov.au/Policies_guidelines/EAGs/Pages/default.aspx

WA Government Environmental Offsets Register

The Western Australian Government's Environmental Offsets Register was launched in August. It is a public database providing a consolidated record of environmental offsets arising from Ministerial conditions following the EPA's assessment of proposals and from conditions of clearing permits issued by DER. The register includes information on the spatial location of the offset; the type of offset and values being offset; the compensatory values of the offset; and milestones and timeframes for implementation. Visit www.offsetsregister.wa.gov.au

REFIRE - DER's Licensing Reform Program

Re-Engineering For Industry Regulation and Environment reform is to improve the Department of Environmental Regulation's (DER) industry regulation business and ensure consistency in licensing for industry. Visit <http://www.der.wa.gov.au/our-services/licences-and-works-approvals/refire>

Conferences

26-27 November
Integrating Biodiversity Outcomes with Streamlined Planning Conference, Sydney.
Includes federal and state government presenters on streamlined planning reforms, as well as case study examples of frameworks and practices for integrating biodiversity outcomes e.g. offsets. Visit <http://biodiversityoutcomes.com/overview/>

28-29 November **A Climate of Change—the next frontier of environmental accounting, Fremantle.**

Australian Institute of Environmental Accounting annual conference will provide insights on updates to clean energy liability, NGER, NPI, EEO, sustainability, CFI, water accounting. Visit www.environmentalaccounting.org.au

31 January 2014
WA Wetland Management Conference, Cockburn Wetlands Education Centre. For more information contact Denise on 9417 8460 or denise@cockburnwetlands.org.au. Visit www.cockburnwetlands.org.au

March 2014
Fostering Sustainable Behaviour Workshops, Perth. To register visit www.ecocentrics.com.au

31 March–1 April 2014
Resources and the Environment—the next ten years, Esplanade Hotel, Fremantle.
Geoscientists Symposia (GS) and the Australian Institute of Geoscientists (AIG) continue their successful partnership to run a quality Symposia. ECA is a sponsor of this symposium which entitles ECA Members to be eligible for the reduced registration fee. Visit www.aig.org.au or www.geosymposia.com.au

Citizen Science

BirdLife Australia Carnaby's survey
BirdLife Australia launched a Carnaby's survey across the breeding range of the species in September. People across the Wheatbelt and Great Southern regions are being asked to report any sightings of Carnaby's Black-Cockatoo until the end of December. BirdLife are also interested in hearing from people that used to have Carnaby's in their local area, but no longer see them. The survey should contribute to our understanding of breeding distribution, nesting and feeding sites. Report sightings via an online survey form: <http://www.birdlife.org.au/projects/carnabys-black-cockatoo-recovery/breeding-range-survey>; it takes only a few moments to complete. For more information contact Matt Fossey on 9287 2204.



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Deadline TBA in weekly ECA updates.

Previous editions of
ECA WA News available at
<http://www.eca.org.au/downloads>

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