

## Increased Collaboration and Planning to drive fire in the Western Desert

While strong Indigenous engagement in contemporary NRM has been one of the success stories of the Rangelands NRM's Western Desert Project, a Fire Management Workshop held in March 2011 highlighted how the project has also been a great example of collaboration and planning.

The workshop was facilitated by Rangelands NRM and primarily focused on resolving what western science was recommending about indicators for monitoring fire scars, data quality, ongoing monitoring and priority areas for fire management.



Typical fire front in old spinifex

Researchers from both CSIRO and Stanford University helped set the scene in terms of traditional fire burning practices identified from research spanning back to the late 1980s. Aerial photos from the 1950s also showed some classic traditional burns for the protection of culturally significant sites. The workshop involved representatives from Rangelands NRM, Kanyirninpa Jukurrpa (KJ), Central Desert Native Title Services (Central Desert), DEC Pilbara as well as DEC's Science Directorate and Fire Management Services, CSIRO and Stanford University.

Agreement was reached on a way forward to improve the quality of data to assist with an effective applied fire regime. Data includes long-term, traditional, local and regional information. The data and planning processes will also identify remnant native perennial vegetation that may need protection from broad scale aerial burning that is done in conjunction with the traditional owners.

A small working group was formed to develop a monitoring framework to sample

*Continued on next page .....*

Inside this issue:

Fitzroy River Catchment Erosion Control Workshop	2
Two way working - Birriliburu	3
Regional Landcare Update	4
Rubber Vine	5
Funding Opportunities	6
For Your Information...	7



Carnarvon Range – old spinifex country can be seen in the top right hand corner of the photo

## Fire in Western Desert Cont'd...



**Cleon Anderson burning by hand on Birriliburu country**

the project area for increased small, mosaic patch burning similar to the traditional fire regimes maintained by the traditional owners as a natural part of their hunting, foraging and traditional lifestyle.

The mosaic pattern is important to decrease the risk of large wildfires and to ensure a variety of fire scar ages and regrowth stages for spinifex that is essential for threatened fauna species and other small to medium size marsupials.

Some fire management activities with that objective have already been undertaken as a part of the Western Desert Project – see the article opposite about the integration of traditional ecological knowledge and western science in the Birriliburu native title determination.

The increased collaboration also led to agreement to prepare an investment proposal under the Caring for our Country 2011-12 Business Plan Open Call process for a large scale fire management project to increase the resilience and quality of native habitat for threatened species.

The proposal will help further develop planning and delivery processes as well as introduce the use of helicopters to allow access by traditional owners to sensitive areas to be protected by ground burning.

The March Fire Management Workshop was part of the Western Desert project's regional NRM planning process across the two native title determinations that comprise 20 million hectares of WA's desert country and spans 4 IBRA regions. The broader process had identified fire management as requiring a separate workshop.

**The burning crew from the Birriliburu native title holder group**



## Fitzroy River Catchment Erosion Control Workshops

Rangelands NRM and DAFWA have teamed up to bring Darryl Hill, of Soil Save in the Northern Territory, to the Fitzroy to run a series of one-day erosion control workshops. The workshops are for competent grader drivers and provide practical information and demonstrations on design and maintenance of station roads, tracks and fence lines.

Darryl Hill is highly recognised throughout Australia for his practical knowledge and experience using graders and other earth-moving machinery. For more than 40 years he has studied soil erosion from a variety of viewpoints; as a ringer, head stockman, property manager and landcare officer. Darryl travels widely, running grader workshops across Australia's rangeland areas and working with station staff, station managers, rural communities and government departments.

**Where/When:** Larrawa Station 8<sup>th</sup> August & Liveringa Station 10<sup>th</sup> August

**How much:** FREE!!! (supported by Rangelands NRM)

**For more information or to register please contact:**

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## Two way working on Birriliburu Country



On Birriliburu, native title holders have been strongly engaged over the past year in Rangelands NRM's Western Desert project with more than 30 Martu involved in activities ranging from providing fire management to track based monitoring and performing environmental assessments of remote biodiversity hotspots (waterholes, creeks, break-aways) in the Birriliburu native title determined area.



Fire Scarring on Birriliburu country

The remoteness of the Birriliburu native title determined lands means that much of the landscape has had little impact from European settlement while, in recent times, many of the Martu who once lived 'on country' had moved into towns and communities like Jigalong and Wiluna. In this time the country has seen a decrease in fire management activities and much of the country has become overgrown with uniform, old spinifex hummocks that are posing a significant wildfire risk.

Through involvement in the Rangelands project, Martu who left Birriliburu country have been enabled to



Fire management activities on Birriliburu country

return to the area to begin the task of reinstating the fire regime which has kept their country alive and healthy for thousands of years. In August 2010, with the help of the DEC WA Goldfields office fire management team, Birriliburu native title holder have performed a combination of on ground and aerial burning around the Carnarvon Ranges.

Birriliburu native title holders had mandated that no burning could be conducted on their land unless the knowledge of the elders could be incorporated into the fire plans such as where, when and what to burn. The 2010 exercise proved a great success as indigenous knowledge provided the basis for decisions to perform protective burns by hand around 'sacred places' and in the selection of the large old growth spinifex patches. Elders also took to the air and, in combination with the aerial burning technicians from DEC, selected a large area of country into which fire was be introduced as a priority.

In 2011 the aerial burning regime has continued at the Carnarvon Ranges and for the first time under this project, in the east of the determination area to the north of Mungilli claypan. Once again a combination of on ground burning and aerial burning were combined to put fire back into a landscape which has suffered for many years from the lack of routinized burning since the Martu had been away.

## There's a lot happening in our backyard!

Over the past year landholders across Western Australian have helped protect and re-vegetate more than four million hectares of land. That's almost 9000 individuals and nearly 700 groups, who have worked closely with the State's six regional natural resource management (NRM) groups.

The six NRM regions are encouraging everyday people to start taking a closer look at natural resource management in their backyard, from houses to farms, rivers, bush land, desert and the coast.



There's a lot happening in our backyard

There are 56 regional groups across Australia, working with thousands of people just like you to protect our forests and other special places



5 JUNE

WORLD ENVIRONMENT DAY

Forests: Nature at Your Service

In support of the UN International Year of Forests

## WA Rangelands Regional Landcare Update



Your friendly Regional Landcare Facilitators **Kaz, Alex** and **Mel** have been busy in their respective regions talking to people and developing projects and training opportunities.

**Kaz** has been scooting about the countryside attending meetings and assisting groups to submit applications for the latest funding rounds. On her travels she has been treated to impressive shows of fat shiny cows, ewes with a spring in their step and resilient landscapes flourishing after some desperately needed rainfalls. Plans are well underway to once again get out and about to meet more of the great people and places of the Southern Rangelands.

The Central Rangelands has been busy over the past few months with dogging meetings and funding submissions. **Alex** has been working with the Carnarvon Rangelands Biosecurity Group on securing funding for an additional dogger in the southern Gascoyne. She has also been assisting pastoralists in the Ashburton to apply for funds to acquire a seeder to spread native seed across barren areas. The Gascoyne Catchments Group has been busy with the development of a cattle database and the updating of their website. It is hoped that the database will be launched in the next month so stay tuned for

more information.

Over the last couple of months **Mel** has divided her time between the Kimberley and Pilbara. She has become a bit of a meetings junkie however it has been a great opportunity to meet a vast range of people and get a good picture of the Landcare issues and priorities across the region. It is especially encouraging that despite the busy season descending very quickly this year the West Kimberley LCDC and the Roebourne/Port Hedland LCDC managed to hold successful meetings.

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## 2011 State NRM Conference 'The Knowledge Generation'

The Conference will be held at the Perth Convention and Exhibition Centre from Tuesday 23 to Thursday 25 August 2011.

The Conference will offer an exciting program to delegates and an opportunity to discuss how we share and interact with our world. The combined industries of digital earth modelers, the spatial sciences industry and those involved in conservation and sustainable management will come together to network and share and gain ideas, insight and lessons learned.

The conference program will cover a broad range of digital earth modelling, natural resources management and geographic information issues. The Conference will involve plenary sessions for all delegates combined with parallel sessions, workshops and "coffee house" sessions with specific land care and digital earth themes. The program will be divided into streams,

with each segmented into key areas.

Global thinking and local action will be merged in an extensive program provided by the joining of forces of ISDE (International Symposium on Digital Earth), the WALIS (Western Australian Land Information System) Forum and the WA NRM (Natural Resource Management) Office.

More information on the combined conference can be found [here.....](#)

## Community Action Grants

Community Action Grants are a small grants component of the Australian Government's Caring for our Country initiative that aims to help local community groups take action to conserve and protect their natural environment. The grants are targeted towards established local community-based organisations that are successfully delivering projects to support sustainable farming and/or protect and enhance the natural environment.

<http://www.nrm.gov.au/cag/index.html>

## Rubber Vine - Lets Keep it out of the Kimberley!



Rubber vine (*Cryptostegia grandifolia*) is a Weed of National Significance (WoNS) which poses a serious threat to Western Australia's biodiversity, tourism and agricultural production. It is a woody perennial vine that colonises areas, aggressively forming impenetrable thickets and dense canopies smothering native vegetation.



Juvenile Rubber vine on the lower Fitzroy River

Rubber vine was first discovered in the West Kimberley in September 2005, at the Willare Bridge car park on the Fitzroy River, about 50km south of Derby. Since 2005 much effort has been put into survey and control operations involving on-ground and aerial surveillance. This has bought the infestation under control by reducing the primary seed bank and preventing further spread.



John & Wayne pulling pods from a mature Rubber vine and controlling seedlings from it.

The West Kimberley Rubber Vine Steering Committee has recently endorsed a Business Case Proposal to eradicate rubber vine from the West Kimberley over the next 5 years. The Committee includes representation from Pastoralists, Industry, Community volunteers, National Rubber Vine Management Group, Rangelands NRM, Department of Environment and Conservation and Department of Agriculture and Food.

## Kimberley Science and Conservation Strategy

The Kimberley Science & Conservation Strategy has recently been released by the Department of Environment and Conservation. An initial amount of \$63 million until 2015 has been committed to implement key initiatives which will include Kimberley Wilderness Parks; training and employment for Aboriginal Rangers; new landscape approach to conservation; investing in knowledge and making information available and a major boost to nature-based tourism.

*"The strategy is one of the most significant conservation initiatives in Western Australian history, befitting of a region of such international significance. The Kimberley is a spectacular place, renowned for its natural and cultural significance as well as its raw beauty. It holds a special place for many people, locally, in WA, Australia and across the world.*

*This major investment in conserving the Kimberley will provide opportunities for Aboriginal involvement and employment in land management, and will promote nature and culture-based tourism." (Premier Colin Barnett)*

The full Kimberley Science and Conservation Strategy can be downloaded at:

[www.dec.wa.gov.au/kimberleystategy](http://www.dec.wa.gov.au/kimberleystategy)

## Regional Achievement & Community Awards

The [Regional Achievement & Community Awards](#) for Western Australia are about recognising rural and regional achievers in your community.

Awards such as these create an opportunity to say thank you to businesses, community groups and individuals who work tirelessly in developing their chosen fields of endeavour.

The search is on for individuals and group high achievers, towns and communities that are making a difference to their communities through their hard work, dedication and innovation.



**Nominations Close:** 23rd August 2011

**Judging:** 5th October 2011

The finalists and winners of the Regional Achievement and Community Awards for Western Australia will be announced at a special gala awards presentation dinner -

**Presentations:** 11 November, 2011.

## Future Funding Opportunities



The following table show funding opportunities that are either currently open, or will be in the near future:

Grant	Details	Amount	Due Date	Contact
Woodside Social Investment Program Natural Energy; Environmental health & well-being	Working with the community to better understand and protect our land and marine environments in the areas we live and operate:	Applications will be judged individually on merit	<b>Open</b> 1 July 2011 <b>Close</b> 29 July 2011	<a href="http://www.woodside.com.au/Our-Approach/Our-Communities/Pages/Funding-Applications.aspx">http://www.woodside.com.au/Our-Approach/Our-Communities/Pages/Funding-Applications.aspx</a>
Caring for Our Country Community Action Grants	Proposals are required to address the CfoC National Priority Area of Community Skills, Knowledge & Engagement and one of the following: Biodiversity & Natural Icons; Coastal Environments & Critical; Aquatic Habitats or Sustainable Farm Practices	Between \$5,000 and \$20,000	Close at 5pm AEST 1 August 2011	<a href="http://nrm.gov.au/cag/index.html">http://nrm.gov.au/cag/index.html</a>
Keep Australia Beautiful Litter Prevention Grants	Funding to support litter prevention projects which include the following sites: Sporting & recreation venues, shopping & commercial precincts, Roadsides & waterways & trial projects which will develop a model for future litter projects	Up to \$10,000	<b>Open</b> 1 August 2011 <b>Close</b> 7 October 2011	<a href="http://www.kabc.wa.gov.au/programs/litter-prevention-grants/index.html">http://www.kabc.wa.gov.au/programs/litter-prevention-grants/index.html</a>
Conservation of Natural Heritage - LotteryWest	Funding is available for the following activities: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Planting local species of trees and vegetation; Bush corridors (40 or more metres wide); Preventing rising salt from destroying vegetation; Fencing remnant vegetation and wetlands; Controlling weeds, animals, disease and fire;</li> <li>Producing education material about conservation;</li> <li>Providing the equipment needed for a conservation project</li> </ul>	\$15,000	On-going	<a href="http://www.lotterywest.wa.gov.au/grants/grant-types/heritage-and-conservation/natural-heritage">http://www.lotterywest.wa.gov.au/grants/grant-types/heritage-and-conservation/natural-heritage</a>

## For Your Information .....



### Grains Industry National RD&E Strategy

The Grains Industry National Research, Development and Extension (RD&E) Strategy document is now available.

The Strategy has been produced after nearly two years of extensive industry consultation. It provides a framework to encourage greater involvement in priority setting, continuity of investment and improvement in the effectiveness and efficiency of RD&E.

It was developed through the Primary Industries Ministerial Council (PIMC) initiative to encourage greater collaboration and promote continuous improvement in the investment of RD&E resources nationally.

More information can be found on [Grains Producers Australia Website](#)

### International Year of Forests 2011

The United Nations General Assembly declared 2011 as the International Year of Forests to raise awareness on sustainable management, conservation and sustainable development of all types of forests.

Australia has the world's sixth largest forest area, with a total of just over 147 million hectares, or around 21 per cent of the country's total land area. Most of Australia's forests are found in Queensland, with 52.8 million hectares of forest covering almost one-third of the state.

[UN Website](#)



## Nominations now open!

The nomination period for the 2011 WA Environment Awards is now open.

The awards acknowledge businesses, government agencies, community groups and individuals who make a valuable contribution to protecting and conserving the State's natural environment.

Now in its 10th year, the awards recognise projects that set new benchmarks in environmental care and biodiversity conservation.

If you believe the community group you volunteer with, or the business you are employed by, deserve recognition for environmental excellence please apply. Entry is free.

This year there are 11 categories:

- Community Achievement – Regional
- Community Achievement – Metropolitan
- Environmental Sustainability
- Environmental Education and Communication
- Government Leading by Example
- Small Business Leading by Example
- Biodiversity Conservation
- Bush, Land and Waterways
- Rivers, Estuaries and Wetlands
- Resource and Waste Management
- Corporate Business Leading by Example.

Nominations close on 29 July 2011.

For details on how to enter visit the Department of Environment and Conservation's website [www.dec.wa.gov.au/awards](http://www.dec.wa.gov.au/awards).

For more information please phone 6467 5147 or email [awards@dec.wa.gov.au](mailto:awards@dec.wa.gov.au).



Department of Environment and Conservation  
Department of Regional Development and Lands  
Waste Authority



Australia is a world leader in recycling old newsprint, with recycling levels reaching 78 per cent last year.

20110210

**Researchers have found that ants and termites increase wheat crop yields in Australia's dryland soils - the insects' tunnels channel rain deep into the soil where plant roots can access it - termites also have nitrogen fixing gut bacteria that improve soil nitrogen levels (NRM on Farms)**

**Barring Perth, there's more water in Australia's storages than ever before - dams are filled to the highest point since they started being built in the 1940's - just under 2 million litres is being stored for every man, woman & child - ABC.**

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Phone: 08 9192 5212 (Mel)  
Fax: 08 9168 3596

## Kununurra Office

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## Carnarvon Office

C/- Department of Agriculture & Food  
Cnr Research Road & South River Rd  
PO Box 887  
Carnarvon WA 6701  
Phone/Fax: 08 9941 9748

## INSPIRING AND FOSTERING PARTNERSHIPS TO SUSTAINABLY MANAGE OUR REGION'S NATURAL ASSETS

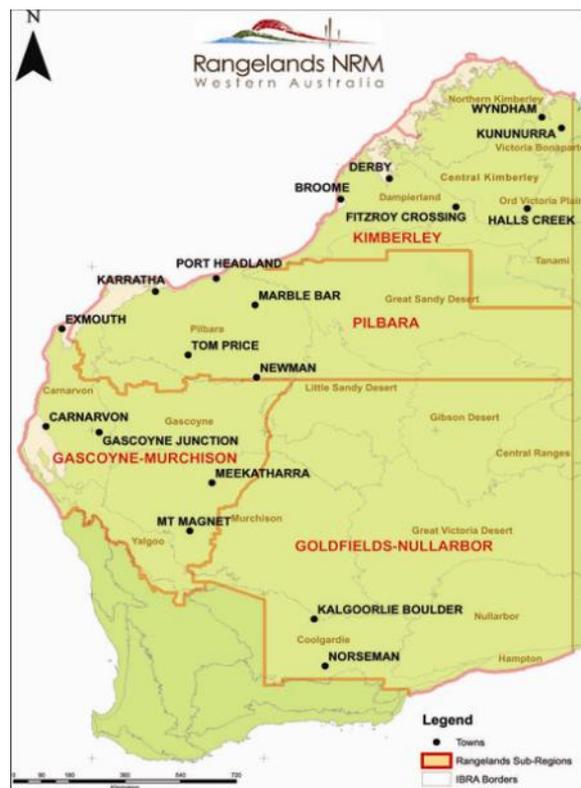
[www.rangelandswa.com.au](http://www.rangelandswa.com.au)

Rangelands NRM WA is the largest NRM region within Australia and encompasses over 86% of Western Australia's landmass and more than 75% of its coastline.

Rangelands NRM WA is a non-government organisation which represents community needs and encourages the sustainable use of land, flora and fauna, fresh water and coastal marine environments.

Rangelands is responsible for the establishment, management, evaluation and communication of many natural resource management activities and projects.

With the rangelands area producing more than 88 percent of Western Australian's mining activities and contributing significantly to the Western Australia's gross domestic product, Rangelands WA strives to balance the needs of the environment with the needs of those who use the land and water resources.



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