

Conservation Covenant News



Welcome to the National Trust of Australia's (WA) Conservation Covenant Program newsletter. As 2008 draws to a close the covenant team looks forward to 2009, during which we will celebrate 10 years of conservation covenanting. Thank you to all for your resolute commitment to positive land management and for your continued support in placing conservation covenants over private land. The last 10 years have seen the conservation covenant program grow into a great success. We very much look forward to reaching out to more and more like minded landowners; landowners who share our drive to conserve the precious biodiversity of Western Australia, and take this opportunity to wish you all a very safe and happy festive season. **Best wishes, Louise Leigh, Conservation Covenant Program Coordinator.**

reduction in land value, there may be incentives available through tax deductions or reduced rates.

It is worth noting that rating authorities are required to revalue the property once a covenant has been registered. If the value of the property varies due to the covenant then the rates will vary in proportion. Some municipalities do offer general property or water rate reductions. You should check with your local council. For more information regarding land value please contact the Valuer General Services on (08) 9429 8400 or via email at ys@landgate.wa.gov.au. For information regarding possible tax incentives please contact the Australian Tax Office on 13 28 61 or via email at www.ato.gov.au

A gnamma is a water hole in a rock & were traditionally made by enhancing a natural depression or geological fault in a large rock that naturally held water following rainfall. This was done by lighting a camp fire on the area (when the area was dry) and chipping out the rock weakened beneath the fire after the fire had been extinguished, providing a more reliable source of fresh water. A flat piece of exfoliated granite was then often placed over the gnamma to prevent animals from drinking or fouling this valuable source of water in an otherwise arid landscape. Gnammas provided countless generations of Aboriginal people with a network of reliable water supplies throughout the current Wheatbelt and interior of Western Australia.

The gnamma pictured above appears to have had about a 20 litre capacity but is now very definitely dry, as it is horizontal. I have seen gnammas excavated horizontally into rock outcrops (usually from much softer granite) but this one was apparently once upright. The gnamma appears to have tipped over in recent times as a line can be clearly seen inside the gnamma where the lichen is growing on the surface of the rock above what was once the gnamma's waterline. This leaves an intriguing mystery for someone to solve. Was the rock, which appears to be very heavy, tipped over by vandals, or was the force of nature in the form of lightning, which has



With your participation and support, the National Trust now has 124 conservation covenants in Western Australia, ranging from Geraldton Sandplains to the Esperance Plains. 50,076.23 hectares of land across WA is currently under NTWA conservation covenant,

protecting 13,176.25 hectares of bushland. This covenanted land provides protected habitat for native fauna & flora, maintains wider biodiversity, and allows land owners to ensure that the land they value is protected beyond their lifetime. For information about placing a conservation covenant on private land for you or someone you act for, contact the covenanting program on (08) 9321 6088.

Normally covenanting has no effect upon land values as land use generally remains unaltered. Overseas experience suggests that covenanting may lead to a slight increase in land value because of the superior land management practices that often result. With more people looking to move to the country in search of a tree change lifestyle, properties with NTWA covenants registered on title are seemingly being favoured due to the long term protection the covenant affords. Of course value depends on the particular circumstances of the property; anyone concerned with the potential impact of a covenant should consult a qualified land valuer. In some circumstances, where there is a



been known to crack large rocks, responsible? Happy pondering. **By Steve Newbey, Covenant Officer.**



2008 has been the Year of the Frog,

with many frog-focused events taking place around the country. There are approximately 6000 amphibian species world

wide, and of this number between one third and one half are faced with extinction. Loss of habitat, urbanisation and the pollution of waterways are contributing to the decline of frog populations. Here in W.A, the conservation covenant program has aided the well being of frogs by working to place land that provides vital frog habitat under conservation covenant. Land already covenanted in the Margaret River area may help the survival of two endangered frog species, the Sunset & White-bellied frogs. As Year of the Frog ends, spare a thought for the habitat needed by the frogs of our State.

I was attending my first Albany

Agricultural Show on behalf of the National Trust, when a grey Albany sky opened up whilst exhibitors were setting up their information stalls. Buckets of rain were dumped onto the venue's muddy grounds, but the rain also caused most exhibitors to pause, take a breath, look around and say hello to one another.

Amongst those greeting one another were staff and volunteers from: Dept of Environment and Conservation, Project Numbat Inc, Friends of the Western Ground Parrot, Gilberts Potoroo Action Group, South Coast Natural Resource Management, The Oyster Harbour Catchment Group, Forest Products Commission, Dept of Fisheries, Centre For Sustainable Living, Carnaby's Black Cockatoo Recovery Project and the National Trust (WA) Covenant Program.



After a busy day on Friday, we braced ourselves for an expected Saturday onslaught. Sure enough, by 10am our marquee was bursting at the seams with visitors from all over the South Coast region, eagerly wanting information on a wide range of topics, including aquaculture, tree-planting, weeds, native flora and fauna, bush-tucker, dieback, wetlands, feral animals, fencing, wildlife corridors and the National Trust (WA) covenant program.

Albany DEC staff were wonderful in their support of the NT Covenant Program, directing prospective clients in my direction, whilst giving visitors updates on DEC's Potoroo and Noisy Scrub Bird recovery program in the Two Peoples Bay and Waychinicup region. There was a flutter of excitement amongst DEC staff when I mentioned that I may have spotted a rare Ground Parrot not far from the Porongurups a couple of days earlier.

By Saturday afternoon most of my paraphernalia had gone, and well pleased with the public response to the National Trust Conservation Program, I looked forward to returning to my accommodation at the eco-friendly Cape Howe Cottages. Attending the Albany Show was a wonderful way to network and meet like-minded people, as well as a good reason to visit the beautiful South Coast region of Western Australia. **By Peter Murphy, Covenant Officer.**

Enclosed with this newsletter is a

complimentary copy of *Biodiversity in the Paddock: a land manager's guide*. This excellent publication was produced by Future Farm Industries in conjunction with the CSIRO, and offers a wealth of information about managing land in ways that encourage growth, long term viability and a diverse ecology. The publication is an interesting read for farmer & non-farmer alike. All the best for 2009.



If you have any questions on any of the information provided or would like further information, please contact the Natural Heritage staff at the National Trust.

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