

NATURAL HERITAGE

KYLIE DAM RESERVE: MOVING FORWARD

Laura Colman, National Trust

The National Trust has been working closely with the Shire of West Arthur and the local community to rehabilitate and protect Kylie Railway Dam Reserve. The railway and associated water supply structures are an important part of state and local history, representing one of four remaining integrated constructions of their type. The native bushland on the reserve also has significant heritage and biodiversity values; however, grazing of the northern and eastern portions of the property has degraded the natural values of the site. In recognition of this, the site has been vested in the National Trust, who will coordinate the rehabilitation project. Long term, the property will be transferred to the Department of Environment and Conservation for its ongoing protection and management.

The first stage of the project will be the development of a conservation plan, which will guide rehabilitation works and the long-term management of the site. This will begin shortly, thanks to a \$13,914 grant through the Lotterywest Conservation of Cultural Heritage program. It is important that the conservation plan reflects the diverse values of the site, so that these can be managed effectively over time.

A further \$56,695 has been received through the Blackwood Basin Group's Groundworks scheme for on-ground rehabilitation works, which will include: revegetation; fencing; weed and feral animal control; and earthworks to improve cross-land water flow and minimise erosion. The National Trust has also established a tax-deductible appeal to receive public donations to fund the ongoing management of the site. In this way members can actively support the project.



Kylie dam and water pipe support structure.

The local community has a strong connection to the reserve and will play an important role in its rehabilitation and ongoing management. The National Trust arranged a field trip to the site on 24 May 2007; this provided an opportunity for representatives from the National Trust, the Shire of West Arthur, the Forest Products Commission, West Arthur Sports Club, neighbours and the local community to discuss the project in detail and establish a shared vision for the future of the reserve. Individual community members have volunteered their time and resources to assist with the rehabilitation works, which are due to commence as soon as funding is released.

The future is looking bright for Kylie Dam Reserve. The support that the project has attracted will ensure that the reserve is actively managed for conservation, far beyond the initial rehabilitation project, for the benefit of the community and future generations. If you would like to contribute to the conservation of this important heritage site, please contact the National Trust on (08) 9321 6088 or visit www.naturalheritage.org.au.



Natural Heritage Manager, Alan Briggs (far left), meets with community representatives and Kim Allen (Forest Products Commission) to discuss the rehabilitation project. Photo: National Trust.

A TALE OF TWO COVENANTS

Julia Dalby, Natural Heritage

As we move into the new millennium, our urban landscape spreads further afield, engulfing wetlands, bushland and rural landscapes. However, nestled in Keysbrook, in the Southern Swan Coastal plain, is a different and very encouraging story involving two families, Alan and Marrion Elliott and Val and Peter Thompson, and nearly 200 hectare of high quality remnant bushland and wetland.

THE ELLIOTTS



Paperbark (*melaleuca preissiana*) bushland forming part of the Elliott's wetland, J. Dalby

Alan and Marrion Elliott live on a 129-hectare property, *West Kingia*, which has been in Alan's family since the early 1900s. The property was subdivided by Alan's brother and part of that subdivision is the block that now belongs to Val and Peter Thompson.

Originally a farming property, Alan and Marrion made the decision to fence off the existing bushland from stock when they moved to the property in 1985 – in

1999 they went much further by removing all stock from the property, establishing their block as a conservation zone only. These were some of many brave and proactive conservation actions taken by Alan and Marrion, which included placing a National Trust conservation covenant over the property. The covenant, which is registered on title, made Alan and Marrion's conservation plans and wishes "official" by legally protecting the bushland in perpetuity.

Alan, by his own admission, was somewhat of a novice when he and Marrion first embarked upon preserving their bushland. Benefits of placing the covenant on the property included the information network it opened up for the Elliotts "and all the caring, beautiful people you meet" to quote Alan Elliott. The advice and support they received from Landcare in particular has been a source of great assistance. Alan is now a board member for Landcare SJ Inc. He is also a member of the Reserves Advisory Group for Serpentine-Jarrahdale Shire. Alan and Marrion's exceptional commitment to educating themselves was nurtured through Greening Australia's Biodiversity Action Learning Program (Matrix), with *West Kingia* being their Action Learning Site. Alan and Marrion even have their own private herbarium, complete with photographic records, which was started by the Western Australian Wildflower Society.



Alan and Marrion Elliott, J. Dalby/National Trust.

Alan and Marrion have always been environmentally aware, an awareness that Alan feels just gets stronger as time goes by. They have undertaken dieback control and have fenced off the bushland. They have attended workshops on the practice of sustainable seed collection on the property. Alan and Marrion have had success in regenerating previously degraded areas. Weed control and

reduction of feral animal numbers is ongoing. The result is a truly beautiful, and now protected, area of remnant bushland with excellent biodiversity values; classified as Yangedi Swamp Bush Forever Site number 77. Alan and Marrion are excellent role models for all landowners who might like to conserve their own remnant bushland.