



## Autumn 2007

### In this issue

Partnerships, In the field at Eurardy, The Thomas Challenge, Rick Farley Memorial Scholarship awarded, A new face for Bush Heritage



## Our partners – we couldn't do without them

**Contributors to this article include John Long, Museum Victoria, Alison Howes and Martine Maron, University of Southern Queensland, and Colleen Kredell**

In a laboratory in Museum Victoria, samples of fossil-laden rock from Bush Heritage Cravens Peak Reserve in Queensland are fizzing away in acetic acid. They are gradually yielding many small but well-preserved remains of ancient fishes from the 380- to 390-million-year-old sites.

In the woodlands of Carnarvon Station Reserve in central Queensland, Alison Howes from the University of Southern Queensland is measuring variations in the vegetation and counting numbers of small woodland birds and their aggressive competitors, noisy miners.

While Alison is working on the birds, dedicated volunteers Don and Betty Wood continue to collect and photograph the vast array of plants at Carnarvon. They are gradually building both a field and digital

herbarium, as well as recording changes in the vegetation structure at key sites. This information is helping Bush Heritage ecologists to track the recovery of the habitats over time.

Back in Melbourne, American intern Colleen Kredell has been working in the Bush Heritage Conservation Support Centre conducting a sustainability audit of the organisation. Her report is helping us to minimise our energy use and waste. Her efforts are changing for the better the way we think about and use energy.



Clockwise from top: Cravens Peak Reserve, Qld. PHOTO: WAYNE LAWLER/ECOPIX  
Dr Gavin Young rediscovers the fossil sites. PHOTO: COURTESY MUSEUM VICTORIA  
Gould's monitor at Boolcoomatta Reserve, SA. Pink mulla mulla *Ptilotis exaltatus* at Cravens Peak Reserve. PHOTOS: WAYNE LAWLER/ECOPIX





At nearly every reserve, and in every way, members of the community are working with us to help us to conserve and understand the land in our care and to improve the way we work.

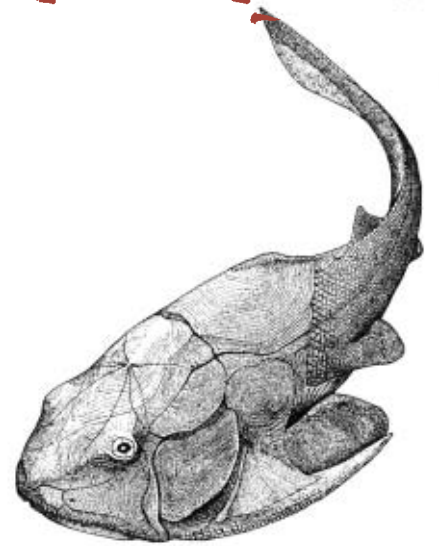
Partnerships like these, whether with research organisations, groups or individuals, are building a network in which information, expertise, opportunities and enthusiasm are shared. Everybody benefits. The greatest beneficiaries of all, however, are our landscapes, threatened species and the environment generally. The Bush Heritage Conservation Partners Program is helping to build these connections and provide opportunities and support for its participants.

Through these partnerships we are discovering some remarkable facts about our reserves.

The joint expedition by Museum Victoria and the Australian National University to Cravens Peak Reserve in July 2006 is a great example. John Long, Tim Holland and Brian Choo from Museum Victoria and Gavin Young and Tim Senden from Australian National University set out across Cravens Peak to relocate some outstanding fossil beds first found in 1977 by Dr Young. They knew that these sites contained a great diversity of ancient fish species from the early to middle Devonian Period, including the world's only known representatives of the unique class of jawless vertebrates.

Their two days of rough four-wheel driving into the north of the property was rewarded. The team found limestone containing perfect three-dimensional fossil scales, spines of jawed fish and perfect teeth and scales from early sharks. In sandstone sediments they found that one particular group of fishes, extinct armour-plated fishes called placoderms, was dominant.

Perhaps the most significant fossils found at the sites were the remains of early bony fishes. These included the remains of giant predator fishes and extinct groups like the dagger-



toothed fishes. Cravens Peak Reserve could be of international significance in having the oldest known record in the world of this group of fishes.

As the acetic acid continues its work back in the laboratory more discoveries will be made, perhaps including new evidence of the unique jawless vertebrates.

At Boolcoommatta Reserve in South Australia a stream of research groups is providing baseline data on nearly everything you can think of. Last year the reserve hosted 45 scientists and volunteers from the Scientific Expedition Group, as well as the Field Naturalists Society of South Australia and the Mineralogical Society of South Australia. The Scientific Expedition Group team spent twelve days gathering



Clockwise from top: Scientific Expedition Group members record mammal data at Boolcoommatta Reserve, SA. PHOTO: JULIAN FENNESSY *Wuttagoonaspis*, an extinct placoderm found in the sandstone. Dr John Long looks for fish fossils. IMAGES: COURTESY MUSEUM VICTORIA Boolcoommatta Reserve, SA. PHOTO: WAYNE LAWLER/ECOPIX

information on plants, animals and archaeological sites. Among their discoveries were a rare South Australian plant Australian broomrape *Orobanche cernua* and another stand of the endangered purple-wood *Acacia carnei*. The significance of an old axle and two wheels was not lost on them. It came from a vehicle used by Douglas Mawson on an early expedition to the region. One of the wheels now resides in the South Australian Museum; the other wheel and the axle remain on the reserve.

The discovery by the Field Naturalists Society of the skeletal remains of threatened or extinct species such as the yellow-footed rock wallaby, golden bandicoot, Gould's mouse and stick-nest rat tell us a lot about the wildlife that the reserve would once have supported, and thus its past habitats. This information may help to determine how we manage the reserve and its wildlife into the future.

Alison Howes' work on noisy miners at Carnarvon Station Reserve also provides the sort of ecological information that will guide management decisions on the reserve. She is trying to discover why the noisy miner, usually an occupant of more degraded habitats, is still present in such high numbers despite marked improvements in the quality of the woodlands over the past six years.

Noisy miners are aggressive, colonial birds and are known to contribute to the decline of populations of smaller woodland birds.

If Alison can discover the reasons for the persistence of the miners, then Darren Larcombe and Matt Warnock, reserve managers at Carnarvon, may be able to modify their land management regime to discourage the miners and enhance the habitats for the smaller woodland species.

Providing opportunities and support for young people through training and involvement in conservation management is also a major benefit of the Conservation Partners Program. International interns, such as Colleen, come and live in Australia and work with Bush Heritage as a requirement for completing degrees in conservation management. The Rick Farley Memorial Scholarship also provides support for young Indigenous Australians who wish to work in conservation management. Wandandian man Darren Brown is the first recipient of this scholarship (see Page 5).

Bush Heritage reserves protect not only rare ecosystems and threatened species but also critical sites that need to be carefully managed. These include important sites for Indigenous Australians, springs and waterways, geological formations, fossil beds



and sites of historical importance. There are also unique management issues on some properties, which make the involvement of experts from outside Bush Heritage invaluable. Their research and experience help us to make the best possible decisions about caring for the land and its special values.

Our conservation partners bring this expertise and knowledge to us, giving us a better understanding of the land, its ecology, its evolutionary history and its cultural significance. This understanding is the key to ensuring that the reserves are properly managed for the long term.

Alison Howes' work is being supported by a grant from Land and Water Australia.



Clockwise from top: Guinea-flower at Carnarvon. PHOTO: WAYNE LAWLER/ECOPIX  
 Noisy miner, an aggressive competitor to small woodland birds. PHOTO: PAUL EVANS  
 Spotted pardalotes are harassed by noisy miners. The healthy woodlands are still home to noisy miners. PHOTOS: WAYNE LAWLER/ECOPIX





## Eurardy – news from the field

**Leanne and Paul Hales have just completed their first year as reserve managers at Eurardy Reserve**

Spring has come and gone for another year and it is hard to believe that Paul and I have just clocked up our first twelve months at Eurardy Reserve in Western Australia. It feels like only yesterday that we pulled up that dusty red drive for the first time, agape at the vibrant wildflower displays for which Eurardy is renowned.

It was a daunting task to arrive at such a well-known wildflower destination in the middle of one of the most abundant flowering seasons on record, especially considering our new responsibilities as tour guides. But

before long 'the red ones' became *Leschenaultia* and *Calothamnus*, 'the blue ones' *Dampiera* and the pale pink ones ... well they're still anyone's guess.

In stark contrast to 2005 there was no winter rain to kick-start this latest wildflower season and in 2006 'the red ones' flowered only in isolated pockets and 'the blue ones' didn't show up at all! While this was a bit disappointing for the local wildflower enthusiasts and interstate and international tourists, it was quite fascinating from a land-management perspective.

During our first year at Eurardy we were lucky enough to witness how the landscape responded to unseasonal winter and summer rains, followed by an equally uncharacteristic dry spell. The changes in the timing of flowering, emergence of weeds and movements

of animals, particularly the birds, were dramatic. Without a doubt, the observations we have made in recent months will allow management decisions to be better informed in the future.

Now, as the mercury hits the mid-forties and the sun drains the colour from the landscape, we have come to appreciate how truly astounding the seasonal changes are in this arid environment. We are looking forward to the subtle and not-so-subtle changes that each new day brings.

Our apologies to Gregory Peterson whose photo of the volunteer team at Charles Darwin Reserve, printed in *Bush Heritage News*, Summer 2006, was incorrectly credited.



Clockwise from top: Leanne sorts native poplar seed for replanting. Red-tailed black cockatoos in flowering *Parakeelya*. 'The red ones', *Calothamnus* sp. 'The blue ones', *Dampiera* sp. Paul and baby Beth with Greens Senator for Western Australia Rachel Siewert and adviser Chris Twomey. PHOTOS: PAUL AND LEANNE HALES





## Rick Farley Memorial Scholarship awarded

The inaugural Rick Farley Memorial Scholarship for Indigenous people working in conservation management was awarded to Wandandian man Darren Brown at Booderee National Park, Jervis Bay, in December 2006. It will enable Darren to complete his TAFE training in conservation and land management. He is working with Professor David Lindenmayer from Australian National University on the traditional lands of the Wreck Bay Community.

'I feel very humbled by the Rick Farley award and the support David's team has given me to develop in the job,' Darren said. 'It has helped me to better understand the science and ecology of the Booderee National Park. The more people you train up in this kind of work the better.'

Rick Farley died tragically in May 2006. He was on the Board of Bush Heritage from 2002 and was particularly active in promoting alliances with Aboriginal people. He was a remarkable Australian.

Many individuals and organisations donated in memory of Rick to help build the value of this scholarship. A cheque for \$30 000 was presented to Bush Heritage by Max Bourke of the Thomas Foundation. 'I hope Darren's success here will encourage others to donate to the memorial fund and enable more Aboriginal people to work in conservation management on their traditional country,' Max said.



## A boost for the environment

David Thomas, a prominent Australian philanthropist and businessman, has challenged Australians to match his personal commitment of \$10 million and raise a record \$20 million to save some of the country's most threatened lands, waters and wildlife. Gondwana Link, our collaborative landscape rehabilitation project in south-western Western Australia, is one of three projects selected by Mr Thomas to be an initial recipient of these funds.

To encourage private philanthropy for the environment, David and his wife Barbara have structured this gift in the form of a challenge grant. Under the Thomas Challenge, the Thomas Foundation will provide up to \$2 million each year for the next five years. It will match gifts given by individual Australians or private foundations for eligible projects.

Gifts from \$10 000 to \$1 million can be matched, and pledges over a number of years may be matched for up to three years.

'Australians have a choice. We can heal our ailing lands and waters, or we can watch the treasures of this unique continent disappear before our eyes. This is a decision we must make for ourselves, for our children and for the world. I made my choice and now I'm asking my fellow Australians to make theirs,' Mr Thomas said.

The Nature Conservancy will administer the challenge. The Nature Conservancy has supported Gondwana Link for some time and Greening Australia WA and Bush Heritage are two of its Australian partners.

Since the challenge was first mentioned in our summer 2006 letter, Bush Heritage supporters have committed over \$380 000 to this challenge. We have been astonished and delighted by this response! If you would like to boost the Thomas Challenge further and double the benefits you can bring to the environment, please contact Lea-Anne Bradley at Bush Heritage on 03 8610 9113 or [lbradley@bushheritage.org.au](mailto:lbradley@bushheritage.org.au) Your support, no matter how or what you give, is greatly valued by all of us at Bush Heritage, and it is bringing help to our land and wildlife. Thank you.



## The evolution of Bush Heritage

### **Bush Heritage President Phillip Toyne explains a new development for the organisation**

Welcome to the new face of Bush Heritage. It represents a fresh and dynamic start to a new stage in our endeavours to protect one per cent of Australia by 2025.

Last year the Board agreed that it was the right time to revitalise our name and logo, to represent visually the changes through which the organisation has passed in the last sixteen years and to set our sights on our twenty-year vision.

Over the years, your loyal support has enabled us to transform Bush Heritage from a small organisation with a few reserves into the dynamic organisation that we are today. We hope that this new expression of our commitment and enthusiasm is one that feels right to you also.

In modifying the name of the organisation we decided to remove the word 'Fund'. It was a source of confusion to many and the name was long and cumbersome. We chose the name 'Bush Heritage Australia'. Most people already know us as 'Bush Heritage' and we wanted to be instantly recognisable as a national organisation.

The new logo represents a more dramatic change. Instead of the three tall eucalypts, our logo consists of three brushstrokes in brown, ochre and blue, three colours that symbolise a classic Australian landscape – the rich, warm colours of the earth, and the blue of the water and our vast Outback skies. It more appropriately represents our new way of thinking about conservation; we are no longer working just to protect single properties but to conserve whole landscapes of land and water.

In deciding on a logo we looked for a striking symbol that stood out from those of other organisations working for the environment. We wanted people to recognise the logo easily and come to associate it with the vital conservation work we do. It needed to be contemporary and dynamic and to reflect the diversity and creativity within the organisation.

We hope that you share our enthusiasm for this next stage of our work. We move forward with a broad vision, a new look and a deep commitment to protecting our unique landscapes and our wildlife. It will be an exciting journey.



Broad horizons at Cravens Peak Reserve (top) and the intense colours of the Carnarvon Station Reserve grasslands (above) are reflected in the new Bush Heritage logo. PHOTOS: WAYNE LAWLER/ECOPIX



## From the CEO

Earth's natural forces have been in everyone's minds over the summer, perhaps more than ever before. Bushfires raged in Victoria for more than 50 days and other states too have experienced extreme temperatures and severe drought, fire and flood. As I write at the end of January, our staff on remote properties in Queensland have been marooned by heavy rainfall and vast inland 'oceans'.

Without wishing these extreme events on anyone, for there is serious hardship and inconvenience involved for many, they have heightened our awareness of how vulnerable we are to the weather, climate change and the state of Australia's waterways. We are finally starting to understand our relationship to the land. It is clear that we must take action at an individual level to ameliorate our contributions to these problems. And we can!

One of the great things about being part of Bush Heritage is to see how your support contributes to protecting our landscapes (both large and small), waterways, and native animals and plants. You are helping to build more robust natural systems that will be better able to withstand the effects of global warming.

It is important that we publicise what we do. We need to engage people's interest, heighten their awareness and encourage their support, both as donors and volunteers. The greater the number of people involved, the greater our impact will be.

I hope you saw the excellent article in *The Age* and *Sydney Morning Herald Good Weekend* magazine on 13 January (go to [www.bushheritage.org.au](http://www.bushheritage.org.au) and follow the link to *News*) or heard Alexandra de Blas on *Night Life* on national radio. In addition, you may have seen media coverage of a new challenge grant for the environment, to which Bush Heritage

can apply for approved projects (see Page 5).

I am looking forward to this year and to meeting the goals we have set Bush Heritage to extend our work and influence. We have a bold new plan for the next five years and beyond, a bold new look, a great team and fantastic support. Thank you. Please keep your eyes on the website (which will also have a new look in the next few weeks) and contact us if you want further information. We hope that you will see more of Bush Heritage in the media too.

In closing, I wish to thank all those who supported me over the summer as I overcame a health scare. It was tackled successfully, allowing me to return to work with a terrific bunch of people doing a very important job.



Doug Humann

## In memory

Lesley and Dennis Archibald remembered their friend **Don McMinn** who 'had a deep and abiding love for Australia's wildlife and plants'. Helen Jenkins donated for **Mark Maunsell**.

Viv Donovan gave for her late son **Paul Donovan** and Carolyn Eaton for her cousin **Fiona Patterson**. Cheryl Turner honoured her husband **John**. Anne Bondin donated for her mother **Lya Kuntz** who always loved nature.

## In celebration

Many birthdays were celebrated with gifts to Bush Heritage. Cathy Day gave for her father **Peter Forster**, Suzanne Farrugia for **John and**

**Oskar Deininger** and **Lisa Sulinski**, Derek Hodges for his parents **Ron and Gwen**, Greg Good for **Olivia O'Neill**, Halinka Lamparski for **Tristan Derham**, Carol Lancaster for **Peter and Wendy Edney**, Beth McLean for her daughter **Bridgid**, Carol Riley for her mother **Gillian Eason**, and Cherisse Robinson for her mother **Marion Nichol**.

Louise Harrison honoured the 40th birthdays of **Stephen Shepherd** and **Sally Cope**. Susan and Charles Edney, Annie and John Grindrod and John Rodd celebrated the 50th birthday of **Sally Rodd**, and Charlotte Gillespie the 70th birthday of her father **Martin Maynard**.

Dugald Jellie donated money raised at his 36th birthday bash.

Carole Dobson honoured her husband **Bill** on his 60th birthday with a gift to the Rick Farley Memorial Scholarship. Pam Robinson celebrated the arrival of **Elisee**, her first great-grandchild.

Phil and Penny Dufty gave for the wedding of **Nicholas Dufty and Sophie Wallis**.

Many of our supporters donated in lieu of Christmas gifts for their family and friends. Jackie Hartnell sent a gift for her daughter **Kate Ansett** as a belated Christmas present.

Peter and Natalie Smith celebrated their granddaughter **Kaitlyn's** successful cochlear implant.

