

Tuesday, 12 January 2010

### **Environment wins with small community grants**

Five environmental and cultural heritage projects in the South Coast region will share in over \$90,000 of funding under the Australian Government's Caring for our Country Community Action Grants scheme.

The Denmark Weed Action Group has received \$20,000 to implement its Community Weed Action and Review Project, focused on protecting and improving public and private bushland areas that display high biodiversity values and Indigenous cultural significance within the Shire of Denmark.

The Friends of the Porongurup Range will also protect conservation and biodiversity values in the region with a \$20,000 grant to control introduced Wattles and Gladiolas surrounding the Porongurup Range National Park. The Wattles and Gladiolas are displacing native vegetation, destroying the habitat of local fauna, and are at risk of spreading to the National Park.

Other recipients of the small grants include the Torbay Catchment Group (\$17,500) for the assessment and removal of invasive weeds in the Torbay catchment; Albany Heritage Reference Group Aboriginal Corporation (\$16,636) for archaeological surveys and the recording of traditional ecological knowledge at the Mount Many Peaks Heritage Complex; and the National Trust of Australia WA (\$17,909) for the eradication of invasive species such as African Boxthorn and the exotic rodent, *Rattus Rattus Alexandrinus*, on Woody Island near Esperance.

The Mt Many Peaks project will also help to protect the significant biodiversity values of the adjacent wetland through native revegetation efforts and the removal of weeds.

South Coast NRM chief executive Rob Edkins said the grants were greatly appreciated and would assist community groups to conserve and enhance the natural South Coast environment and protect Indigenous cultural heritage.

Investment proposals were sought from environmental, Indigenous, landcare, coastcare and sustainable agriculture community groups for grants of between \$5,000 and \$20,000. Projects must be completed within 18 months.

"It's fantastic that our community partners have received funding for these vital projects. The funding comes at a time when South Coast NRM is looking to consolidate and build on the Australian Government's investment in the region through the 2009-10 Caring for our Country Business Plan," Mr Edkins explained.

"With the long-awaited Business Plan now available, we will be working with the community in developing a comprehensive proposal for the region by the March 31 deadline."

South Coast NRM Area Leaders will be in contact with community groups over the next month.

For more information on the Community Action Grants scheme and the Caring for our Country Business Plan, visit [www.nrm.gov.au/caq/index.html](http://www.nrm.gov.au/caq/index.html)

**ENDS**

To arrange interviews with Rob Edkins and/or community groups, please contact Jenelle Carter.

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**South Coast Natural Resource Management Inc. is the leading regional group for natural resource management on the South Coast of Western Australia. As an independent non-profit organisation, we work with the community to improve the environment by preserving and protecting unique plants and animals, managing land and waterways, and sharing knowledge and skills in natural resource management.**