

Bush Links

Linking Biodiversity, Community and Local Government

Background

Bush Links was a joint initiative between the Cities of Wanneroo and Joondalup, Friends of Koondoola Regional Bushland and Friends of Yellagonga Regional Park.

The project aimed to link the efforts of Local Government, professional bush regenerators, residents and school students in local biodiversity conservation activities.

Bush Links was funded for two years by the Perth Biodiversity Project and focused on the management of eight reserves which were previously neglected in the Cities of Wanneroo and Joondalup.



Description of Activities

During the first year of participation, the following activities were undertaken:

- Native vegetation was surveyed in 8 reserves and the overall condition of this vegetation was mapped;
- Professional bush regenerators conducted weed management and rubbish removal in 8 reserves;
- School students learnt about caring for their local bushland and participated in Weedbuster Week activities in 5 of 8 reserves;
- A series of on-the-ground activities were held for community members, e.g. Bush care days in 8 reserves (97 people in 8 days) and Guided nature walks in 8 reserves (39 people);
- The two cities and friends groups worked with other stakeholders such as Birds Australia who conducted surveys in 8 reserves;
- Fire Response Plans were developed with advice from FESA and local fire brigades; and
- Promotion of Bush Links was conducted with the following methods: 16 events (136 people), 39 media releases that resulted in numerous radio interviews and articles. Various signs were installed, including interpretive signs, 8 bush Links signs and 7 naming/conservation signs.

The second year of the project saw the following activities undertaken:

- Positions were created for a full time Supervisor of Natural Areas (City of Joondalup) and Part time Bush Care Coordinator (City of Wanneroo);
- Professional bush regeneration activities continued;
- An additional series of on-the-ground activities for community members continued, e.g. Bush care days in 4 reserves (46 people at 4 events), Guided nature walks in 4 reserves (19 people);
- School student involvement continued with their participation at Weedbuster Week activities in 1 reserve;
- More interpretative signs were installed at 4 reserves; and
- Bush Links continued to be promoted using 15 media releases.

How Bush Links Made a Difference

“The integrated approach of Bush Links means that everyone can participate and benefit”

- Baseline data templates, procedures and an action plan were developed, which has guided ongoing management. These templates were consolidated by the Perth Biodiversity Project and now form the basis of the Natural Area Initial Assessment templates that are now widely used by more than 10 Local Governments;
- The data collected assisted the Local Governments with long-term management planning. The Project also helped the City of Wanneroo to implement actions from its Local Environment Strategy;
- Bush Links worked with land developers to manage bushland reserves from the outset. For example, the Satterley Group was approached about the management of a Public Open Space containing a Threatened Ecological Community. This early intervention ensured the developer undertook management of the natural area prior to the City of Wanneroo taking over management two years later;
- Good working relationships were established with other stakeholders, for example Conservation Volunteers Australia joined the Bush Care Days, adding another dimension to the project and on-going support to the area;
- Bush Links raised community awareness about the importance of urban bushland;
- Weed control was successfully implemented in 8 reserves;
- On-going financial commitment was made by the Cities of Wanneroo and Joondalup. For example, City of Joondalup increased its Bushland Maintenance budget by \$150,000 in the 04/05 financial year; and
- Both Local Governments developed additional projects to facilitate the ecological assessment of all the natural areas that they were responsible for managing.

Further Achievements

The Bush Links Project has been adopted and integrated into the regular activities of the City of Wanneroo.



Contact Details

Visit the WA Local Government Association portal at:
<http://www.councils.wa.gov.au/directory/walga/index.html/pbp>

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