

Newsletter of the Friends of the Western Swamp Tortoise Plans for 2011

- Project to paint tortoises on stormwater drains in Ellenbrook area. Working with local schools.
- Planting, revegetating and enhancing habitat in Ellen Brook, Twin Swamps, Mogumber /Lake Wannamal corridor, Moore River National Park.
- Releasing hatchlings if weather permits
- Participation in the Volunteering WA website
- Australian Association of Practice Managers National Conference which will support the WST with donations.
- Australian Research Council Linking Grant, through Dr Nicola Mitchell at UWA, will map out suitable tortoise habitat in SW Australia using a mechanistic modelling approach. We are partners in the research, and will be doing on-ground works and revegetation at a later stage.
- In addition to the above we will be presenting our usual newsletters, conducting education visits to schools to talk about the WST, fundraising and assisting DEC and the Recovery Team in any projects they plan.

Annual General Meeting, 2010

The AGM was held at the WA Reptile Park in Henley Brook on 4 Dec, 2010. Thanks to all who attended. It was interesting to see the similarities and differences between some of the other members of the reptile family and our own little tortoise. It is of concern how many reptiles are in a similar predicament, with habitat loss and climate change affecting their survival.

New Executive Committee 2011

Since we strongly believe in recycling – the new committee is the old committee, with the addition of Rahima Bannerman, who has agreed to be our Minute Secretary.

Chairperson	Jan Bant
Vice Chair	Tanya Marwood
Treasurer	Bob Height
Minute Secretary	Rahima Bannerman

Where are they now???

By Helen Pitman

As In the heat of summer the Western Swamp Tortoises are on the move, out of the drying swamps and into aestivation tunnels. Aestivation is a type of hibernation that occurs over summer and the Tortoises use natural or artificial aestivation tunnels. Aestivation protects the tortoises from the hot Western Australian summer and any bushfires that may occur. It is also the place where eggs are laid and incubated for hatching the following winter.

The picture on the right shows an artificial aestivation tunnel at Twin Swamps Nature Reserve.



RECOVERY TEAM

The Western Swamp Tortoise Recovery Team has representative members from all stakeholders in the WST recovery effort. Chaired by C. Olejnik (DEC) and comprising Perth Zoo Administration and Keeping staff, University researchers, DEC staff, Friends group representatives and others, this team meets twice a year to discuss all aspects of management of this threatened species. Some of the highlights from the December 2010 meeting follow: Perth Zoo now has shell notched tortoise number 1000.

6 new tortoises have been identified in the wild.

17 females laid 54 eggs

2 researchers attended a Conference in Adelaide and took the opportunity to visit the insurance colony at Adelaide Zoo.

Bandicoot numbers appear to be under control at Twin Swamps nature Reserve.

Watsonia is a problem in the Reserves and difficult to control because of the necessity for care using herbicides near tortoise habitat. DEC Works Coordinator, Graham Elsdon has developed a Watsonia Glove to ensure herbicide remains on the plant.

ARC grant beginning to obtain data, and will soon develop a screening map of preliminary zones for further investigation.

Architects have developed preliminary plans for the Perth Zoo refurbishment of the Captive Breeding area. Now we just need the money!

Invitation to the AGM of the Urban Bushland Council—a FoWST affiliation.

Tuesday 1st March 7pm.

Lotteries House, 2 Dehli St, West Perth.

Guest Speaker Greg Keighery

“Urban vs urbane wetlands—the frontline of climate change in Perth”.

CHAIRPERSON' S ADDRESS AGM

2010 HIGHLIGHTS

- 15 hatchlings released at Moore River Nature Reserve. 10 were later returned to the Perth Zoo because of insufficient follow up rainfall and water levels. 50 people attended.
- 4 new unmarked hatchlings discovered at Ellen Brook NR indicating breeding taking place in the wild.
- Successful Foodlover's Tour held in February.
- Displays at Men of the Trees Open Day, Perth Zoo Threatened Species Day, Wildflower Fair at Glen Forrest.
- Talks to Armadale Home Schoolers, Challis and Bullsbrook Primary Schools.

For further information on any of the Group's activities, contact

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