

Volunteer involvement with the Boomerang Gorge Bridal Creeper project

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Pike (1996) has described the bridal creeper (*Asparagus asparagoides*) removal project at Boomerang Gorge, Yanchep National Park, Western Australia, which was started in 1993. This paper describes the formation and activities of a group of volunteers formed to run the project in conjunction with the Yanchep National Park Advisory Committee.

When the project was first conceived in 1993, it was anticipated that work carried out by volunteers be supported by CALM in a number of ways. For example, Ranger presence at weed pulls, initiation of a spraying program, disposal of weeds removed and incentives for volunteers.

Funds were obtained by the Boomerang Gorge BCRG in 1993 from the Gordon Reid Foundation for publicity and the production of a video. Also in mid October 1993, the first volunteers were recruited as a result of a news release printed in the Wanneroo Times. An experimental weed pull was held 2 weeks later involving the

First Padbury Scout Group (see Table 1). This group of volunteers was again involved in December, when footage for the video clip about bridal creeper removal in Boomerang Gorge was shot.

In 1994 the video clip was shown on commercial TV channels as a community service announcement. Many people responded to this advertisement, and became involved in subsequent busy bees during 1994. News releases in local newspapers, Ecoplan and Australian Association for Environmental Education newsletters brought more volunteers into the project. Word of mouth amongst friends led to involvement of a few more. Through the year (1994) organizer Susan Harris maintained contact with volunteers by mailing a brief letter on several occasions, and by phone calls prior to each busy bee to encourage participation. Funds from the Gordon Reid grant were used to reimburse Susan for these phone calls, while CALM Wanneroo supplied

photocopy facilities, envelopes and postage for mail-outs.

The project was in recess over the summer months since the creeper is dormant at that time, and the stems and leaves die off after the berries ripen.

In 1995, press releases were sent at the beginning of the season (early in April) to Wanneroo Times, CALM News, Greening Western Australia for Leaflet, Ecoplan News, Radio RTR FM for Understorey and the West Australian for Earth 2000. All these releases invited people to respond by registering their interest with the Park Office, or Jill Vines, volunteer organizer for 1995. Letters were also sent twice during the year to previous participants, using CALM facilities as before. An article about the Boomerang Gorge BCRG appeared in the November 1995 issue of CALM News.

Responses

The response from the community in 1994 was very satisfying, with 105 people becoming active (Table 1). Highest participation was about 20 young people from 1st Como Sea Venturers. The volunteers also comprised family groups, members of other conservation groups, as well as various scout groups. Most busy bees were well attended, with up to 40 participants on some days.

Responses have not been as numerous in 1995 as in 1994 as shown by the breakdown of community group participation in Table 1. Several individual volunteers have been consistent workers, and the Como Sea Venturers have also been regular workers, they are using the experience to contribute to their environment and community service awards. Many of the 1994 volunteers had other commitments when busy bees were being held, others did not wish to continue their involvement. News Releases have not brought the new participants desired.

Tasks carried out by volunteers

Participants were shown how to recognize the creeper, and how to locate the tubers at the base of the stems, then to dig and remove the tubers as completely from the area designated for the day's focus. One busy bee focused on cutting back several large figs and passionfruit vines that had gone wild in the plot being worked. After removal from the ground, the creeper and tubers were loaded onto a truck. Park staff then take the material to the Park's koala feed dump, where it is burned.

Re-weeding was carried out by workers in 1995, to maintain ground in areas cleared the previous year. Volunteers must be able to recognize juvenile plants and shoots, and to dig them out carefully, since there is some regeneration of native species in the cleared area.

Table 1. Number of hours worked by volunteers on the Boomerang Gorge BCRG 1993-95.

Date	Groups	No. of persons	Total hours worked
24 October 1993	1st Padbury Scouts	~10	30
11 December 1993	1st Padbury Scouts	~10	20
	Total 1993		50
6 June 1994	1st Wanneroo Scouts	4	12
	1 Como Sea Venturers	15	45
	Families - 3	13	39
	Individual volunteers	13	39
17 July 1994	North Beach Cubs	32	96
	Individual volunteers	6	18
21 August 1994	No details available		
16 October 1994	1 Como Sea Venturers	12	36
	Families - 4	12	36
	Individual volunteers	11	33
	Total 1994		328
23 April 1995	Families - 1	2	6
	Individual volunteers	3	9
28 May 1995	1 Como Sea Venturers	9	27
	Individual volunteers	2	6
25 June 1995	Individual volunteers	4	12
23 July 1995	1 Como Sea Venturers	3	9
	Individual volunteers	5	15
27 August 1995	1 Como Sea Venturers	16	32
	Individual volunteers	4	12
17 September 1995	1 Wanneroo Brownies and Guides	52	52
	Individual volunteers	1	3
24 September 1995	1 Como Sea Venturers	4	12
	Individual volunteers	1	3
22 October 1995	1 Como Sea Venturers	4	12
	Individual volunteers	4	12
	Total 1995		326

Incentives for volunteers

There is free entry to the Park for volunteers going to busy bee's. Fruit drinks have been provided from the Park Office, usually distributed mid-morning. Tools and gloves are also supplied, though some workers prefer to bring their own.

In 1994 there were several sausage sizzles to supplement picnic lunches, and Aboriginal Bush Tucker was presented at one of these BBQs.

Scouts have taken part in environmental activities run by Park staff and Adventure Caving for senior Scouts and Guides, with normal cave tours for Brownies. At the end of this season, regular participants held a BBQ and were presented with Yanchep National Park Volunteers T-shirts in appreciation of their efforts.

Reference

Pike, D. (1996). Boomerang Gorge Bridal Creeper Project. Proceedings of the Bridal Creeper Symposium, held at CALM, Perth, October 24 1995, eds. J.P. Pigott, D.L. Lamont and G.J. Keighery. *Plant Protection Quarterly* 11, 72-3.