

SERCUL's School's Catchment Education Newsletter

Welcome to Term 3

Looks like another busy Term ahead!

This edition includes information on upcoming PD opportunities, two student competitions, upcoming events and planting sessions to get your students involved in and a focus on Oblong Turtles with a fantastic Our Local Hero story on how Excelsior PS are helping the turtles.

Please find enclosed fliers about Canoeing on the Canning and the Taste of Science Community Fair and Logo Competition.

Amy Krupa

Phosphorus Awareness Project
Coordinator

P.S. - Please pass this newsletter on to anyone you think may benefit from it.

A Taste of Science Logo Competition

Calling all budding artists! The inaugural Taste of Science Community Fair, to be held on Sunday 16th August 2009 during National Science Week, needs a logo to help advertise the Fair to the community. The competition is open to children aged 6 - 12 years with entries closing on Friday 7th August 2009 at 4.00pm. To enter children need to design a logo with a native plants and animals in the Canning River environs theme. For further information including entry details please refer to the flier enclosed with this newsletter or call Amy on 9458 5664. There are fantastic prizes to be won.

The Taste of Science Community Fair will showcase the science of native plants, bush food and medicinal plants from Western and Indigenous perspectives. The fair will be held at the Canning River Eco Education Centre, Kent Street, Wilson from 11.00am - 2.00pm. There will be guest speakers and fun activities such as microscope viewing, cooking, art and heaps of kids activities! Native plants will also be given away on the day.



Entry is free and everyone is welcome! Please bring your own mug for kangaroo tail soup and a bag to carry goodies. This is a waste wise event! For further information please refer to the flier enclosed with this newsletter or go to www.scienceweek.gov.au or www.aaeewa.org.au.

What's on in Term 3?

Ribbons of Blue Macroinvertebrate Workshop



July 30th 2009, 12.30pm-3.30pm

- Herdsman Wildlife Centre

August 5th 2009, 12.30pm-3.30pm

- Peel Waterways Centre, Mandurah

Designed to help teachers maximise the value of the Ribbons of Blue Macroinvertebrate Snapshot activity and include:

- * background information on habitats, food chains and classification, and the importance of 'macros' to the ecosystem;
- * pre-excursion classroom activities;
- * hands-on sampling, sorting and identification; and
- * post-excursion activities including an assessment task and students looking at how they can make a difference to wetland health.

These workshop are free of charge.

For more information, or to book a place at a workshop contact Richard Olive, phone (08) 6467 5127, email richard.olive@dec.wa.gov.au

Perth Zoo Teacher Twilights

Tuesday 4th August 2009

4:30pm – 8:30pm

What's new at the Zoo? Explore a range of curriculum linked activities that will help you use Zoo experiences to the greatest effect when you return to the classroom. This is an opportunity to see Perth Zoo in a different light as you meet some of the animals in the Zoo's collection.

Cost: \$40 (GST inclusive)

Contact Perth Zoo Education on (08) 9474 0365 for more information or to make a booking.





Algae Busters Page



Turtle Talk

How much do you know about the Oblong Turtle? If you are anything like the staff at SERCUL then probably not much! After being contacted by Excelsior Primary School about their turtle 'problem' (please refer to the Our Local Heroes article for details) we now know a lot more. Which is probably a great idea as the Oblong Turtle features rather prominently on our logo!



Some of the facts we have discovered are:

- The Oblong Turtle, *Chelodina oblonga*, is also known as the Western Long Necked Turtle;
- They occur in the Perth Metropolitan Area in permanent and seasonal freshwater water bodies including rivers, lakes, dams, swamps, damplands and constructed wetlands;
- The turtles are most commonly seen in spring and summer. Between September and January each year, the females leave the water in search of suitable sandy soils in which to lay their eggs;
- The female lays 2-16 leathery eggs in a hole that she digs with her back feet. The eggs hatch in 26-41 weeks (depending on weather conditions and temperature);
- Baby turtles are called hatchlings and are the size of a 20 cent coin when born;
- Adult turtles can reach a length of 50cm;
- Adult turtles are carnivorous with fish, frogs and invertebrates on their menu. Hatchlings feed on small crustaceans;
- Oblong turtles are in fact true turtles and not tortoises as they are sometimes referred to. They have flippers or webbed feet for swimming while tortoises have stumpy, solid feet for walking on land.

Information in this article is from the Department of Environment and Conservation Fauna Note No. 37 - Oblong Turtle and Exotic Red-eared Slider Turtle.



Canoeing on the Canning PD

The Canoeing on the Canning - Professional Development Day for Teachers will be held again this year on **Friday 23rd October 2009.**

This will be the sixth time this popular PD has been held. By canoeing on the river you will experience first hand the Canning River ecosystem and its associated problems.

Please refer to the flier in this newsletter for more specific information about the day. Register early to avoid disappointment as the day is capped at 20 participants.

Call Amy on 9458 5664 or email amykrupa@sercul.org.au to register.

Planting Still Available!

There is still time to get your students involved in planting sessions at local bushland, wetland or river areas or even at your own school. At SERCUL we have a number of sites available where students can participate in a hands on educational hour, half a day or full day, depending on what time you have available.

Not only will students be improving their local community but they will learn about the benefits of planting these species including increasing the biodiversity of the area, helping to combat climate change and air pollution and improving the health of rivers and wetlands.

To get your class involved in a planting session either at a local site or a bushland area on your school grounds please contact Amy on 9458 5664 or amykrupa@sercul.org.au.

All plants, equipment and fun provided. It will be first in best dressed!



Phosphorus Action Group - *FREE* Resources for Schools

The Phosphorus Action Group (PAG) is concerned about the high levels of nutrients that are causing the growth of algal blooms in the Swan and Canning Rivers and wetlands. The group offers a number of education opportunities to school groups including:

- Algae Buster School Incursions - interactive, fun programs where students learn about catchments, nutrients and algae.
- Building a Frog Pond Incursion - a must have incursion if a school is considering building a frog pond. Students construct a mini frog pond in the classroom with all the essential elements in constructing a frog pond covered in detail.
- Go Fish! Incursion - students learn what fish live in the Canning River and what we can do to protect our native fish.
- Clean Drains River Gains Incursion - students learn about drains and pollution through stencilling drains at school.
- Planting Opportunities (available Jun - Oct) - students plant local native species into rehabilitation sites.
- Resource Sheets - nine resource sheets are available based around the nutrient issue.
- Nutrient Display - a colourful display which explains the problem, cause and solution to nutrients and algal blooms in our rivers.



For further information about nutrient issues or if you would like a **FREE** presentation or a display to be set up in your school please contact the Phosphorus Awareness Project Coordinator, Amy Krupa on 9458 5664.

Our Local Heroes Turtle Warriors at the Ready

School Catchment Education Case Study No. 19

What do you get when you cross Oblong Turtles and a group of eager year 5/6 students ready to protect them? The 'Turtle Warriors', of course!

Students at Excelsior Primary School are lucky enough each year to see adult and hatchling turtles walking through the school on their way back and forth from sandy breeding grounds and the local wetlands.

Excelsior Primary School, located in Canning Vale, was built on natural wetlands. Some of these wetlands have been left in their natural state whilst developers have created artificial lakes around the estate for storm water catchment areas.



Year 5/6 students learning how to test water to help protect the turtles.

The policy also addressed the need to educate the students at the school about what to do if a turtle is found.

Mr Stephen Davis, a year 5/6 teacher at the school, volunteered his class to be responsible for writing and implementing the policy at the school. "The students are all extremely motivated and are very keen to keep this important program going in the school". The students have also learnt how to test water quality and carry out macro

invertebrate counts to ensure the sustainability of the reptile in the local wetlands and water bodies.

The students voted on the name 'Turtle Warriors' after researching activism and activist organisations around the world. "It was a revelation to the students that they could be activists in their local community, rather than passive bystanders. They chose 'Warriors' as they feel that this is a person who would go out of their way to change something for the better, rather than let someone else do it".

The students have developed a Turtle Kit for when a turtle is found on the school premises. They are also working on a website, a movie, an electronic slide show, a book and conduct regular assembly announcements at school to address the educational responsibilities of the Turtle Warriors organisation.



Year 5/6 students investigating macroinvertebrates.

This is the nineteenth article in our 'local heroes' series. These articles document and acknowledge the efforts of some local schools in the South Region who are doing great things for the environment.

If you would like to highlight your schools achievements please contact Amy on 9458 5664.

Tiwest Night Stalk

1st September - 16th October 2009

Tiwest Night Stalk runs from 1st September to 16th October with the aim of getting members of the community out into nature to do some spotlighting for wildlife.

In previous years, this community action program has focused on marsupials and introduced species but now its scope has been broadened to include all animal species, native and introduced. Each year will focus on a particular group of animals. In 2009 Perth Zoo is asking Tiwest Night Stalkers to keep a keen eye out for unique bird species.



Tiwest Night Stalk is easy, fun and something everyone can do. All you need is a torch and the Spotter's Log. Choose a night or number of nights between 1 September and 16 October and spotlight in your local bushland. Record all the mammals, birds, bats, reptiles and frogs that you find and then send your Spotter's Log to Perth Zoo or email it in via the online form.

Tiwest Night Stalk Teacher Briefing

Find out how you and your students can become involved in Tiwest Night Stalk. Learn how you could do it as a class activity or while on school camp and examine the data collected as a class or school.

Date: Thursday 6th August 2009

Time: 4:00 pm to 5:30pm

Cost: Free



To register or for information about Tiwest Night Stalk go to: www.perthzoo.wa.gov.au/nightstalk

The Great SERCUL Night Stalk

Monday 7th September 2009

6.00pm - 8.00pm

Cnr Vellgrove Ave & Pegley Drive, Parkwood

Supper Provided

RSVP or further info phone 9458 5664

www.sercul.org.au/events.html

The SERCUL Educators wish to thank
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South East Regional Centre for Urban Landcare

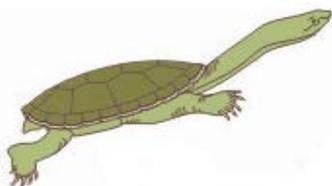
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If undeliverable, please return to:

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Important Dates - Term 3, 2009

31st July	National Schools Tree Day www.treeday.planetark.com
2nd Aug	National Tree Day
15th-23rd Aug	National Science Week www.scienceweek.gov.au
24th-30th Aug	Keep Australia Beautiful Week www.kab.org.au/
1st-30th Sept	Biodiversity Month
7th Sept	National Threatened Species Day
7th-13th Sept	Landcare Week www.landcareonline.com.au
18th Sept	World Water Monitoring Day
25th Sept	Last Day of Term 3



Australian Stockholm Junior Water Prize

The Australian SJWP is a national water science competition for high school students aged 14-19.

Organised by the Australian Water Association, the competition aims to increase interest in water-related issues and research, and to raise awareness and knowledge of global water challenges.

The competition focuses on research projects aimed at improving the quality of life through improvement of water quality, water resources management, water protection and water and wastewater treatment.

Get national recognition and win great prizes.
Entries close 10th December 2009.

For further details and competition criteria contact Patricia Dames on 02 9436 0055 or education@awa.asn.au or check out the website at www.awa.asn.au/sjwp.