In these strange days of COVID-19 fears and restrictions, which we hope will soon begin to ease, Bold Park has proven its worth as a city bushland sanctuary. Park staff tell us that the number of park users has clearly increased in recent weeks – this is obvious from the full car parks and busy trails.

Perth residents have been flocking to the park to find a handy, safe place to exercise and/or seek relief from the stress of worrying about the virus. The trails are a good width, easily allowing people to keep the required distance apart. And, of course, nothing beats the sounds, smells and sights of the bush!

Although we normally focus on the park’s importance for ‘flora and fauna’, it’s times like these we remember that it is also of huge direct benefit to ourselves, for its impact on our physical and mental health and general well-being.

While you are in the park, please observe government-advised protocols, and continue to keep your dogs on their leads! If you have one of our 30th anniversary Bold Park booklets from 2017, you may like to refresh your knowledge of the park before your next visit. Or you can download Bold Park brochures and trails maps from the Botanic Gardens and Parks Authority’s website and use the maps to try out routes you haven’t taken before. (Did you know the park has over 15kms of trails, including the 5.1km long Zamia Trail loop). The website also has further interesting information on the park’s history, as well as plants and creatures you are likely to see on your visit.

We look forward to seeing you at one of our future guided walks, and at our Annual General Meeting, which we hope to be able to hold later this year.

Meanwhile, please stay safe and enjoy your park!

Stephanie Clegg
President
Large trees provide food and shelter for hundreds of animals as well being a thing of beauty to us humans to enjoy. The largest trees on the Swan Coastal Plain are the tuarts (Eucalyptus gomphocephala), and Bold Park is perhaps the best example of a tuart woodland in the metro area.

Tuarts mostly grow within 10km of the coast from Jurien Bay to Busselton. Around Perth they grow about 30m tall (40m in the forests near Busselton) and up to 2m wide at the base. They can be identified from a distance by their glossy leaves and rough, pale grey bark. Due to this they were sometimes called white gums, inspiring the suburb name of White Gum Valley. Flower buds form on a short stem with a wide bud cap that makes them look like ice cream cones. The bud cap eventually pops off to reveal white flowers which, after pollination, form into bell-shaped woody fruits, opening with a cross pattern. The sculptures in the Reabold Hill carpark show these different stages of bud growth, along with some of the insects that rely on these trees.

There is a tiny species of weevil which specialise in eating the tuart flower buds. Similarly, some longicorn beetles only lay their eggs on tuarts. Their grubs chew through the wood beneath the bark, leaving behind zig-zag trails which can ringbark branches. However these grubs are a prized source of food for black cockatoos. The cockatoos can hear the grubs chewing beneath the bark and use their strong beaks to dig them out. Many species of birds rely on the hollows that form in large trees to make their nests, as do possums and bats, while other birds like the brown goshawks use the branches as platforms for their stick nests. Geckoes and huntsman spiders hide in the crevices beneath the bark and several species of fungi can be seen growing on the trunk or around the root zone of mature tuart trees.

By supporting so many of forms of life, tuarts are vital to the health of the ecosystems in which they grow. The tuart woodlands and forests of the swan coastal plain were last year added to the list of threatened ecological communities under the federal Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act. Hopefully this will result in greater protection of remaining bushland areas, such as Bold Park, into the future.
UNFORTUNATELY, WE HAVE HAD TO SUSPEND ALL VOLUNTEERING ACTIVITIES FOR THE TIME BEING DUE TO CONCERNS AROUND THE SPREAD OF THE COVID-19 CORONAVIRUS.

THIS INCLUDES OUR BUSH CARE ACTIVITIES, ADOP-A-HIGHWAY CLEAN UPS AND OUR REGULAR PROGRAM OF GUIDED WALKS. WE HOPE TO RESUME THESE ACTIVITIES LATER IN THE YEAR AS SOON AS IT IS SAFE TO DO SO.

THANK YOU TO OUR REGULAR VOLUNTEERS FOR THEIR UNDERSTANDING AND WE WILL LET YOU KNOW WHEN OUR VOLUNTEER PROGRAMS ARE BACK UP AND RUNNING.

SUNSETS ON SUMMER WALKS

Our series of summer sunset guided walks through the park were successful in showing many people the beauty of our local bushland. Overall numbers were a down a little compared to last year with storms and coronavirus concerns affecting some of the dates, but those who came along saw the bushland changing from Birak into the Bunuru season.

The yellow lechenaultia and snakebush provided some colour low down while higher up we saw the last few slender banksia flowers for the season as the acorn banksias and then the firewood banksias started to bloom. The marri trees also had plenty of flowers to attract the bees and, in turn, the bee eaters which could be heard calling before quickly flying past overhead.

Some of the children on the walks enjoyed looking for the gecko that hides in the gaps of the boardwalk shelter atop Reabold Hill and on a couple of evenings we were lucky enough to spot some wolf spiders amongst the pine needles as we returned to the WAEC carpark on dark. Our wonderful volunteer guides once again did an excellent job of sharing their knowledge and passion for the bushland and we’re sure to see some of the same walkers coming back to learn more in the future.
While summer opened with a bang it didn’t continue with its full fury, so it has been COVID-19 keeping people indoors rather than hot temperatures. As always, the wellbeing of our visitors, volunteers and staff remains our number one priority during the current COVID-19 situation and we are closely monitoring and adjusting according to Government health advice. This means you may notice changes around the park aimed at providing a safe and enjoyable environment to our volunteers, staff and visitors.

With the many other restrictions in place, people have been turning to Bold Park for respite. The natural environment plays an important role in a healthy and balanced lifestyle both physically and mentally, so it is great to see so many people enjoying the park. With over 15 kilometres of walking trail there is enough space to accommodate everyone, though to assist we have had to install some signage to remind people to maintain separation.

If you are visiting the park, please be courteous to one another, move to the edge of the track and pass in single file, maintaining the recommended separation.

For any updates on COVID-19 related impacts to access information is provided on the BGPA notices webpage.

To assist in planning a visit to the park information is available on the Bold Park website to point you in the right direction.

Otherwise it is business as usual for staff in the park.

Over summer staff have been busy collecting and processing seed from the bushland. The seeds have been cleaned and assessed and will be transferred into the constant temperature and humidity room. From here some seeds are destined for plant production as part of our restoration plantings, while others for longer term conservation in the Kings Park seed vault. For the conservation species the time at constant temperature and humidity prepares the seeds for the sub-zero temperatures in the vault and prevents damage during freezing. Some seeds from uncommon species will be used in propagation trials at the Kings Park nursery to assess their potential for future restoration plantings.

Seed and cuttings provided to the Kings Park Nursery last year have been propagated with our vigorous and healthy plants being shifted out of glasshouses to begin the hardening off process. Our advanced tree specimens along Oceanic Drive appear to be establishing well assisted by supplementary summer watering and additional plants are being produced to extend planting further to the east. Veld and Pelargonium surveys were conducted across the Oceanic precinct, which is being used to assess the effectiveness of control activities along with feeding into planning control for this coming season.

General park maintenance has been ongoing, Scenic Walk and Drive received attention from contractors with the crack sealing completed to prolong the bitumen’s lifespan. Timber work on the Reabold Hill walkway was recoiled in preparation for winter and benches around the park are being tended to.

The fire season has so far produced three Total Fire Ban days requiring park closures and patrols, with an additional four Severe Fire Danger Days where staff increased patrols. All but two of these days occurred in early December. While the fire season finishes at the end of May, we will be continuing to monitor the weather and will implement risk management activities accordingly.

Last year saw Very High fire danger forecasts continue into early June so please remain vigilant when you are in the park and contact ‘000’ if you see a fire.