



## GRANTS ASSIST ALFRED COVE BIRDLIFE

The restoration of Alfred Cove A-Class Reserve has progressed steadily throughout the winter season. With the help of funding from a DEC *Environmental Communities Grant*, *Riverbank* funding and corporate sponsorship through *Conservation Volunteers*, thousands of sedges have been planted in places once choked with kikuyu and other weeds.

Planting and weeding are always enjoyable activities at Alfred Cove due to the beauty of the surroundings. Invariably, visits from the local bird life - such as the white egret (*Ardea alba*) - lift workers' spirits and give good reason to their labours!

One of the most elegant of birds frequenting the Reserve, the white egret is usually seen stalking slowly and alone in shallow waters up to 30cms deep. Its sinuous neck is longer than its body and its yellow bill changes to black when courting. Nesting takes place in spring, with three to six eggs being incubated by both the male and female. Its staple diet consists of fish, crustaceans and frogs, so a healthy habitat is imperative.

To enable others to enjoy watching the birdlife without causing disturbance - and thanks to a grant from *CoastWest* - we plan to install a small, unobtrusive and safe viewing platform in an existing opening in the foreshore vegetation. The platform will replace a park bench that currently sits unevenly on a bed of insidious *kikuyu*.



A white egret graces Alfred Cove.  
(Photo by Jane Leahy-Kane)

## WORLD RIVERS DAY

World Rivers Day is celebrated globally each year on the last Sunday in September. It draws community attention to the many values of rivers, encouraging improved stewardship and promoting the active involvement of citizens to ensure the health of rivers in the years ahead. This year World Rivers Day will be on Sunday 25th September.

## CLEAN-UP MORNING AT MILYU

A pleasing number of volunteers joined in a recent event organized by SERAG in celebration of Keep Australia Beautiful Week. Efforts focused on cleaning up one of the storm water drains that flow from the streets of South Perth into the Marine Park off Milyu A-Class Reserve.

As you can imagine, the drains bring with them a variety of pollutants and litter which can impact badly on the health of the Estuary and the fauna it supports.

Volunteers planted over 400 *Baumea juncea* in and along the margins of the drain. When established this sedge will filter nutrients and other pollutants from the storm water as it flows into the river.

A number of bags of litter were collected and disposed of more appropriately too, the plastic caps of bottles being among the most common items found.

Many hands made light work; and after only a couple of hours the job was completed and morning-tea was enjoyed.

Although we were working immediately adjacent to the Kwinana Freeway, the noise and rush of traffic was completely forgotten, with the tranquil river and the brilliant blue sky providing a perfect backdrop.



Volunteers work on a drain at Milyu.  
(Photo by Margaret Matassa)

# EROSION CONTROL AT PELICAN POINT & MILYU

Erosion caused by boat wash and storm damage has badly affected all three A-Class Reserves.

Thanks to an NRM grant and *Riverbanks* funding, SERAG volunteers - with the assistance of teams from *Conservation Volunteers* - have commenced installing coir matting to combat erosion in susceptible areas at Pelican Point and Milyu.

Eroded banks are first built up then covered and strengthened by long rolls of coir matting pegged into the soil. Sedges are then planted closely and deeply in small holes cut at regular intervals in the matting. The finished product looks remarkably like a hair transplant!

So far the strategy seems to be working well, the plantings withstanding repeated inundation from the huge tides we have seen over winter. In the longer term we hope that the sedges will help to stabilize the beach areas.



Volunteers install and plant sedges in coir matting along an erosion site at Pelican Point.

## TRENCHING

Another successful restoration strategy is to use trenches for mass plantings of sedges in drier ground.

Narrow and deep trenches are dug in ribbons along contour lines, and each sedge is then planted at the base of the trench.

Rainfall that would normally just run off the surface of the ground now fills the trenches and is given time to seep down to the roots of the sedges. The sedges are also protected over their first summer months from the hot dry winds that absorb moisture.

The trenches disappear over time as the plants grow and multiply and soil drifts into the depressions. We have used trenches for selected plantings in all three A-Class Reserves.



Narrow deep trenches collect water and protect sedges from drying wind.  
(Photos by Jane Leahy-Kane)

## ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING - 12th October 2011

It seems amazing that a year has almost passed since the official launch of SERAG Inc.. With strong support from both our membership and the wider community, it has been a very busy and productive twelve months.

We hope that as many members as possible will be able to attend our first-birthday AGM, to hear about and celebrate the progress that has been made to date and to learn of and contribute to our plans for the future. It will be held in the AH Bracks Library, cnr Canning Hwy and Stock Rd Melville, from 6.30pm to 8.00pm. An agenda will be distributed to all members prior to the meeting.



### FOR YOUR CALENDAR:

- **Saturday 10.09.11:** Planting at Alfred Cove
- **Sunday 25.09.11:** World Rivers Day
- **Wednesday 12.10.11:** SERAG Inc Annual General Meeting
- **Friday 28.10.11:** Community Information Presentation at Glyde-in
- **Wednesday 26.10.11; Saturday 29.10.11, and Saturday 26.11.11:** Activity Days - locations to be confirmed

Please contact us for details if you would like to participate.  
Your support will be warmly welcomed.



Swan Estuary Reserves Action Group Inc.

PO Box 73 North Fremantle WA 6159

Phone: 08 9339 2439

Email: [oneillc@westnet.com.au](mailto:oneillc@westnet.com.au)