

YIMARDOO WARRA RANGERS

NYIKINA MANGALA 2017-18

newsletter





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As we come towards the end of another busy dry season the rangers are still working out on country as we progress through the rangers' work plan. It's been a big year, with the Nyikina Mangala Rangers divesting from the KLC in the middle of our busiest time of the year. For the rangers, though, it's been business as usual. KLC has played a positive role in administering the rangers over the years and the Nyikina Mangala rangers are thankful for all their support. The rangers are still connected with the KLC as part of the Kimberley Ranger Network (KRN). We look forward to collaborating in the future with training and Ranger Network events.

The big wet season delayed the start of the year for the rangers, once the ground dried out and the roads opened the rangers started putting their work plan into action.

RIVER RECORDING TRIP

The first big project of the year was the Mardoowarra River Recording Trip. This project started a few years ago recording cultural sites along the river from Mijirrikan (upriver from Barrage) to the mouth of the Fitzroy River. After 3 years of the project being put on standby due to unfavorable river conditions, the rangers organised the next stage from Myroodah.



There were some long days in the 4 x boats as the rangers and TOs travelled over 150km of the river recording cultural sites with the relevant Traditional Owners speaking for different sections of the river. Everybody was really happy with what we achieved. All the sites have been marked by GPS and have been added into the Walalakoo database so these places will always be preserved for future generations. Next year, we plan to finish off the project with the last section from Langi Langi to the river mouth being recorded.

PRESCRIBED BURNING SEASON

After a couple of years of big wet seasons there has been lots of vegetation growth, so the rangers had a solid cool burning season (prescribed burning). There was a big focus on reducing fuel loads on Mt Anderson as it has been over 3 to 5 years since it was burnt last. In the last few years there have been late season hot fires coming over the Grant Ranges, so by burning fire scars into Mt Anderson this should prevent the fires burning all the way to Willare and affecting the communities in-between.





The first big project of the year was the Mardoowarra River Recording Trip (far left) and in May we did a back to country trip to Yarri Yarri at the edge of the Great Sandy Desert.



YARRI YARRI BACK TO COUNTRY TRIP

In May, the rangers did the annual back to country cultural trip to Yarri Yarri on the edge of the Great Sandy Desert in partnership with the Yiriman Project. The goal was to undertake a protection burn around the Outstation, as well to take young people back to country and connect with culture under the guidance of the Traditional Owners as part of the Yiriman Project. Also Mrs Kitty Green, Mrs Annie Narda and the Green family were present. This was the first time for the families to return to Yarri Yarri after the passing of Mr Joe Green & Mr Frank Kidby. The rangers kept everyone busy with activities such as burning around the buildings, hunting, cooking bush foods from turkey, kangaroo, and goannas, and at night time, leading the conversations around the fire. It was a good trip

and we look forward to going back to Yarri Yarri next year where we will start work on the 10 Deserts Project.

NESP RIVER RESEARCH

The NESP river researchers have been on the river a few times this dry season working with the rangers. The focus this year has been looking at the food web of the river. The researchers have been looking closely at the algae, plankton as well as bait fish and cherubim. Also, they have been measuring how much ground water is entering the river using some very specialised scientific equipment. It's great for the rangers to be involved with this study as it's very educational. The researchers also enjoy working with the rangers and TOs as there is a lot the researchers learn from the ranger and Traditional Owners with two-way learning.



ENVIRONS KIMBERLEY BIODIVERSITY SURVEY

In partnership with Environs Kimberley the rangers did a biodiversity survey at the base of the Grant Ranges. It was a successful survey. The rangers set up Elliot traps and funnel & bucket traps, catching and recording lizards, native rock rats and snakes. The second part of this survey will be targeting exotic weeds around wetlands and the riparian zone (river bank) of the Fitzroy starting in mid-October.

BLACK-FOOTED ROCK WALLABY SURVEY

In partnership with WWF the rangers set up a camera sensor array of over 60 cameras on the Erskine Range. The aim of this survey was to monitor black-footed rock wallaby (BFRW) populations as well as animals that may predate on them with a focus on feral cats and wild dogs

/ dingos. We captured many BFRW on cameras. The Erskine Range population is looking strong and the good news is there were very little feral animals spotted on cameras. Something that made the rangers happy was the large number of echidnas caught on camera in the survey. WWF brought out a drone operator from Charles Darwin University to trail a drone to assist in the survey at night time using infrared cameras. The rangers will be getting their own drone in the near future to help the rangers with their work so watch this space!



SAWFISH RESEARCH

The rangers have been working with Murdoch University studying sawfish & northern bull sharks. This season the focus was catching sawfish and operating on them to insert GPS trackers internally. This process is harmless and brings great benefits to learning more about the sawfish. The bull sharks were fitted with activity monitors to study how they move about and expend their energy. Being part of team sawfish with Murdoch University is a favorite of the rangers. This partnership has been going for 15 years with over a 1000 sawfish now tagged in the Fitzroy River. It's the longest continuous sawfish study in the world and the rangers are at the forefront of this research. Raymond Charles & Nathan Green were invited to Perth to the State Library to speak to a packed

house on sawfish conservation, alongside the leading sawfish scientist from Murdoch University. The rangers were a bit nervous speaking to a sold-out audience at the State Library, but they were the stars of the show with their Q&A session. Well done rangers!

RANGER FORUM BURKETOWN QUEENSLAND

Following the success of the Kimberley Ranger Forum held last year at Pender Bay on the Dampier Peninsular, the Ranger Forum was held in Burketown, QLD this year. The Nyikina Mangala rangers attended along with other groups in the Kimberley Ranger Network. Over 30 rangers travelled on a charter bus from Derby all the way to Burketown in the Gulf country in Queensland. The rangers got to see a lot of country as it was a long drive--over 3000kms each way. The rangers all had great



feedback and experienced snake handling, biosecurity workshops and cultural exchange. On the final night, the rangers got to have a bush tucker feast, which they all really enjoyed. We're look forward to the next one.

TRAINING

The Nyikina Mangala rangers have been doing lots of training towards completing their Certificate II and III in Conservation and Land Management. This started off in March, with language, literacy & numeracy training in Fitzroy Crossing, followed a few week later by a chemical training back at Fitzroy Crossing then Cert II training around Port Smith where the rangers were taught about prescribed burning and what is required to be safe on the fire ground. In May, the rangers headed up to Beagle Bay to complete the Cert III in wildfire.

It's critical that all the rangers who work on fire fronts must have the appropriate training. Also, at Beagle Bay, the rangers completed a remote First Aid course. In late July, the rangers headed out to Warmun community to do welding training, and in August, a TAFE trainer came out to the ranger base for an intensive week of training on small motors maintenance, chainsaw operation, and chemical application. From all this training, Raymond Charles has now completed his Certificate III in Conservation and Land Management and Nathan Green has completed his Certificate II in Conservation & Land Management. Already, Nathan is on his way to complete his Cert III with several units already completed. Congratulations to Raymond & Nathan on completing your certificates



NEW RANGER BOAT

The Nyikina Mangala Rangers would like to thank Lotterywest for approving a grant for the rangers' new work boat. The new boat is very well-suited for river work when there is flood or when we're undertaking jobs at the mouth of the river, where there is high water flow from the tides. Thanks Lotterywest for your support.

KLC AGM

Recently, KLC held their AGM at Ngumpan Community. The rangers were on the roster helping with the behind the scenes logistics. One of the highlights for the rangers and Nyikina Mangala TOs was having the opportunity to dance on the final night. Everyone enjoyed themselves at the AGM and watching Yothu Yindi New Generation performing in the electrical charged atmosphere! That was

something to remember for all those who attended, seeing the lightning in sky and the wind and dust blowing. Just after the band sang the last song some very unseasonal rain started to fall. It was a special night for all who attended.

IN CLOSING

Our team all feels very privileged to work as Nyikina Mangala rangers. It's a great opportunity to work on country and it's a source of pride to wear the uniform. We look forward to the exciting projects that are planned ahead!

Galeo Mimbi





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