



environs

KIMBERLEY INC.

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Dear Supporters,

NEWSFLASH!! Willare Bridge Picnic Day - EK members are invited to attend a day of celebration of the Fitzroy River at the picnic area located at the western end of Willare Bridge on Saturday March 14, 9am - 5pm. The celebration is part of the **International Day of Action Against Dams and for Rivers, Water and Life**. BYO everything.

The Environs Kimberley campaign to oppose the damming of the Fitzroy River is gaining in momentum. The highlight of the campaign so far this year has been the visit to the Kimberley by well-known Greens Senator, Dr Bob Brown. Dr Brown pledged his support for the campaign when he addressed a special meeting in Broome last month, attended by more than 50 EK members. He was in Broome on his way to take part in a ten-day canoeing expedition down the Fitzroy River, from Mt Barnett Station to Fitzroy Crossing. Dr Brown was accompanied by Bunuba man and expedition leader Joe Ross, canoeing expert Hugh Sullivan, several members of the media and other interested parties. Mr Ross and Senator Brown both stressed the national and international concern the dam would create, if the Western Agriculture Industries (WAI) proposal goes ahead.

Membership of Environs Kimberley - We currently have more than 200 financial members. Local Kimberley members are being joined by many others from elsewhere in Australia and overseas who are equally concerned about the threat to the 'wild river' status of the Fitzroy.

Renewal of Membership - At this point, all members are considered to be financial, regardless of when they joined. Members who joined prior to June 1997 will be invited to renew their membership in three months time, in June 1998. Thereafter, renewal notices will be issued every six months.

Executive Committee - The present make-up of the EK executive committee is as follows: Chairperson - Matt Wrigley; Deputy Chairperson - Pat Lowe; Secretary Maria Mann; Treasurer - Wendy Albert; Committee members - Peter Bibby, Janice Kent-Mackenzie, Peter Mitchell, Craig Phillips (Jo Boots has resigned, pending an overseas trip. We thank her for her time and energy, and wish her well.)

Reminder! - In order to maintain the integrity of the organisation, EK members are asked not to write letters or make statements to the media on behalf of EK without prior committee approval.

Limnology Workshop - EK Chairperson Matt Wrigley attended the one-day *Limnology of the Fitzroy River, WA: Technical Workshop* held at Edith Cowan University, Claremont Campus, Perth on 18 February. (Limnologists are scientists from a number of disciplines who study river and wetland environments.) The workshop brought together almost all of the scientists who currently have any information about the Fitzroy River system and its ecology. "It was useful to make contact with members of the scientific community, whose views will be crucial in enabling EK members and the public to understand and protect the river," Matt said. "While much of the material presented was informative, two themes were repeated over and over again - ***We know very little about the Fitzroy River, its flood patterns, its flora and fauna;*** and ***The impact of building a dam and developing irrigated agriculture can only be understood after many, many years of scientific study.***" These points have been stressed many times over by EK since the campaign began. The workshop, which was sponsored by a number of groups including the Australian Society for Limnology, called for a public enquiry to examine the proposal, prior to a feasibility study being mounted. A summary of papers presented at the workshop is available. Anyone interested in obtaining a copy can do so by contacting EK.



EK members at Old Mornington Station during their visit to Dimond Gorge last year.

EK now has its own Website – <http://www.green.net.au/environs-kimberley> This gives our group and the campaign to save the Fitzroy River a stall at the Mother of all Markets, the Internet. Visitors to the website are invited to leave their comments, questions, suggestions and membership applications at the site. These will be checked regularly. Thanks go to Broome TAFE lecturers Campbell Creswick and Jo Camilleri and their "Class of 97" students for creating the website. In an innovative project, students were assessed on both their computing and communication skills as they constructed the Website, using raw materials supplied by EK. If you are interested but haven't yet surfed the Net, ask a Web-wise friend or try your local Telecentre, or contact Peter Mitchell on (08) 9193 7901.

Memorandum of Understanding - The MOU between WAI and the West Australian government has still not been signed, although we know it passed through Cabinet last year. We understand that it has been on the Premier's desk for several weeks now. What is causing the hold-up? That's anyone's guess.

Conservation Councils National Conference - The combined Conservation Councils of Australia will hold their annual national conference in Broome in June-July, 1998 (dates and venue to be confirmed). The conference will provide an important opportunity for networking with other like-minded people. The theme of the conference will be *Focus on the Kimberley*. Special skills training will be offered to all interested EK members.

Media - Our opposition to the damming of the Fitzroy River and the WAI broadacre irrigated agriculture proposal continues to receive a good deal of media attention. The Bulletin printed an article by Victoria Laurie titled *Water Fallout* in its December 23 1997 issue, The Australian Women's Weekly published a four-page article; complete with photographs, in its February 1998 issue and The Australian ran an article on 27 February 1998 by Asa Wahlquist titled *Water Torture*. The issue also receives almost weekly coverage in the West Australian and Broome Advertiser newspapers, and is regularly discussed on Kimberley regional radio.

EK Information and merchandising stall - An EK public information and merchandising stall has been operating for the past year, mostly at the Saturday Broome Courthouse Markets. It continues to attract a good deal of interest and support. Our new range of hemp T-shirts and Geike Gorge posters is selling well, and there are plans to expand our range of merchandise in time for the tourist season. We will soon have tea towels and bumper stickers for sale, as well as the range of Kimberley books and posters that were so popular last year. An extended range of hemp clothing is also being looked into, and new t-shirt designs are being developed. Several EK members took the stall to the Broome jetty recently, during the visit of the Royal Viking Sun cruise ship, to help spread the EK message, and make sales, to overseas visitors to Australia.

Fundraising - Several fundraising events are being planned for this year. These include the staging of Wild River Rage III, the sale of an expanded range of merchandise and the sale of raffle tickets. Thanks to Michael Curr of Old Mornington Station for donating some wonderful prizes: flights over Dimond Gorge and accommodation at Old Mornington. If you have other fundraising ideas, please contact EK, or come to our monthly meetings and tell us about them.

EK's Draft Vision Statement - "Environs Kimberley's vision for the future of the Kimberley is based on the preservation of and respect for the intrinsic qualities of the Kimberley that make it a unique and valuable region. Environs Kimberley aims to *Save the Nature of the Kimberley*." This draft vision statement is contained in a draft discussion paper and policy document prepared by EK chairperson Matt Wrigley to stimulate thought and discussion among EK members on a number of issues. Copies of the document are available from EK.

Postcard campaign - The "Save the Nature of the Kimberley" postcard campaign, which EK is running in conjunction with the Australian Conservation Foundation and the Conservation Council of WA, is proceeding well. However, the more signed cards that are returned the better. Anyone who has not yet signed and mailed back their cards to ACF are encouraged to do so without delay. Anyone requiring cards, or willing to distribute them in areas outside of Broome should contact EK, and we will make bundles available. Broome member Marilyn Tabatznik has taken over the job of managing distribution and collection locally. Please contact EK if you know of cards that need to be collected, or venues that are willing to distribute them, and we can let her know.

Members Meetings, to which all EK members are welcome, are held on the last Tuesday of every month, 7pm, at CIRCLE House, cnr Weld and Frederick Streets, Broome.