

## **Cultural Signage for Bay**

New signage alongside Crab Creek Road will help visitors to gain an insight into the amazing biodiversity and cultural heritage of Roebuck Bay. The Crab Creek area of Roebuck Bay includes a Wetland of International Importance declared in 1990 under the Ramsar Convention and numerous Aboriginal cultural sites both listed and unlisted that form part of Australia's rich cultural heritage.

The three colourful signs that include a map, provide information about facilities in the Crab Creek area and simple rules for accessing the Bay and Aboriginal lands.

The signage follows other successful community projects instigated in 2003 by the Rubibi Aboriginal Land Heritage and Development Group and WWF-Australia. With Roebuck Bay under increasing pressure from the rapid growth of Broome, the signage will play an important role in raising awareness about the cultural and environmental importance of the Bay.

In 2005 Rubibi developed and distributed a *Welcome to Roebuck Bay* brochure with a map and useful visitor information. Rubibi also assisted Broome Bird Observatory (BBO) in the development of cultural information for interpretative signage installed at the Observatory and for a birdwatching platform overlooking Roebuck Bay.

These projects form part of Rubibi's awareness-raising strategy that has included free Roebuck Bay cultural walks - led by Traditional Owners and local ornithologist Chris Hassell.

Rubibi people have been actively involved in ongoing projects along the shores of Roebuck Bay, including scientific studies into shorebird disturbance, regular mud sampling and seagrass monitoring. The cultural advice has provided historical and cultural data for projects and input for books about the Bay. One such book, a collaborative effort produced by the then Department of Conservation and Land Management entitled *'Life along land's edge: Wildlife along the shores of Roebuck Bay, Broome'*, was launched in 2004. The then WA Minister for Environment Dr Judy Edwards, said when launching the book in Perth, that it was "a celebration of the wonderful qualities of Roebuck Bay and a wake-up call to examine the care of important places". The book depicted the "connection to culture in the beautiful painting of Aboriginal foods by Broome Aboriginal artist Mark Drummond," she said.

These community collaborations have attracted the support of many people and agencies with an interest or management responsibility for areas in and around Roebuck Bay. Project partners have included the Broome Bird

Observatory, Shire of Broome, Kimberley Land Council, Environs Kimberley, Minyirr Park, Rubibi Traditional Owners and the Department of Environment and Conservation - who installed the signage.

Following on the success of this inclusive approach to manage and protect the Bay, in 2004 the Roebuck Bay Working Group (RBWG) formed in Broome. Made up of Traditional Owners, stakeholders, volunteers and agency representatives, the RBWG's Terms of Reference are to develop community based management plans for Roebuck Bay. The Group is making outstanding progress, undertaking Values Mapping, development of an Issues Paper and Interim Management Guidelines for Roebuck Bay. The next exciting step is to undertake a management plan for the Crab Creek area of Roebuck Bay which has numerous Aboriginal Heritage sites, and is a 'Wetland of International Significance' and listed 'Threatened Ecological Community' nominated to join the East Asian-Australasian Shorebird Site Network - as one of the three most important sites for shorebirds in Australia. With the Crab Creek area under increasing pressure, the development of a management plan is both necessary and timely.

More details are available by ringing the RBWG Secretariat Kandy Curran on 08 - 9194 0150.

#### **ATTACHMENTS: Photos**

##### **Roebuck Bay Girls (Left to Right)**

Traditional Owners with RBWG Secretariat Kandy Curran doing site clearance for cultural signage, Susan Gilbert, Elsie Edgar and Thelma Saddler.

##### **Map**

New signage located beside Crab Creek Road.

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