



**Tuesday 3 May 2011**

**Dieback prevention a matter of timing**

Reducing the risk of dieback spread on roads and campsites within the Alexander Bay reserve has been the focus of recent remediation works by Shire of Esperance road maintenance crews and contractors.

While the soil is relatively dry, workers have focused on filling in road bog holes and depressions around campsites that may harbour dieback or allow its easier introduction and spread.

Shire of Esperance maintenance supervisor, Craig Shearer, said filling in the bog holes was an important part of the shire's commitment to lowering the risk of dieback spread.

"Once these holes fill with water they may take months to dry out. By filling them in, dieback will not get the chance to enjoy the warm, moist conditions it needs for reproduction," he said.

"The dry season is the only chance to carry out remedial works like this because soil conditions are consistently dry and the soil won't stick to surfaces like tyres, buckets and blades."

South Coast NRM project dieback officer, Tim Brett, said he was committed to helping contractors modify processes and procedures when maintaining regions where dieback free areas exist.

Mr Brett said it was often the case that maintenance systems were developed long before dieback became an issue in the area.

"All contractors working on public and private lands should operate in dry soil conditions; ensure their machinery is cleaned down before entering dieback free areas; and prevent any movement of soil from infested areas to dieback free areas," he explained.

In the Alexander Bay and Kennedy's reserves, there are small patches of dieback infestations but on the whole they have been strategically assessed as predominantly dieback free.

Visitors to the area can assist by making sure their vehicles are clean before leaving town, staying to formed roads and tracks and avoiding muddy areas.

**ENDS**

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**South Coast Natural Resource Management Inc. is the leading regional group for natural resource management in the South Coast region of Western Australia. It works with community, government and business to improve the environment by preserving and protecting unique plants and animals, managing land and waterways sustainably, and sharing knowledge and skills in natural resource management.**