



Media Release

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Locals rally to restore fish traps

One of Albany's most significant Aboriginal historical sites, the Oyster Harbour Fish Traps, will be delicately restored following recent vandalism.

Albany Heritage Reference Group Aboriginal Corporation chair Vernice Gillies noticed hundreds of stones had been removed from the ancient site, which is one of eight that extend along the north end of Oyster Harbour.

It is understood that Noongar people have gathered in the area for at least 7,500 years and trapped fish in the intricate stone configurations when the tide receded.

Ms Gillies said she was quite concerned that the site had been interfered with, although on closer inspection she noted that whoever had moved the stones had at least heaped them in two tidy piles.

"The fish traps are without doubt one of the most iconic Noongar sites in this region and we have to care for and protect them," she said.

"Over the past year the AHRGAC has hosted community meetings on site, held discussions with government agencies, worked with school groups and met with consultants to draw up plans for protecting the site. Local Noongar people have been consulted about their wishes for the site and that work will go on."

South Coast NRM Cultural Coordinator Shandell Cummings said the fish traps were a very visible reminder of the Noongar way of life and cultural heritage, and should be restored as faithfully as possible.

"We're currently trying to obtain GPS data and photos from previous surveys to determine the shape of the trap so that it can be reconstructed as close as possible to the original.

"We want to ensure that the site and its surrounds are protected the way they should be and this will involve weed control work and the installation of interpretive signage to alert visitors to the site and limit their impact," she said.

Work will likely start in January 2012 with input from South Coast NRM's Cultural Connections Work Team, AHRGAC, WA Museum Albany, Department of Indigenous Affairs, Archaeologist Paul Grenfeld and local elders.

ENDS

Jenelle Bowles
Communications and Public Relations Coordinator
South Coast NRM
Direct (08) 9845 8521
Mobile 0428 928 536
Email jenelleb@southcoastnrm.com.au