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Outward Bound on top of Dieback

Staff of outdoor education specialists Outward Bound enjoyed an interactive workshop in dieback management in the Walpole Wilderness recently.

South Coast NRM Project Dieback Officer Liz Edmonds helped the company's Walpole-based team leaders understand the methods of dieback spread, how to prevent it and what they should look out for when in the bush.

The workshop is part of a campaign to raise awareness among local community groups and businesses of the implications of dieback in the Walpole Wilderness.

The Walpole Wilderness covers a large area of the South West and has a diverse range of natural communities. It also contains some of the most significant dieback-free areas in the southern region with over two-thirds of the area dieback free.

Dr Edmonds said dieback was widespread throughout much of the lowland areas of the wilderness and was causing permanent changes to natural ecosystems.

"We're asking people to protect the upland flora communities and keep them free from dieback," she said.

"As outdoor enthusiasts, Outward Bound has a great opportunity to help promote the protection of dieback free areas to a wide group of people in their expedition courses."

Prevention methods highlighted in the workshop included washing vehicles and camping equipment, keeping footwear clean (especially when moving from lowland to upland areas), and keeping to existing tracks.

Dr Edmonds said she was pleased to receive strong positive feedback on the issue from the team leaders and to discuss the ways in which they could improve the effectiveness of their current hygiene practices.

Community groups or businesses wanting more information on protecting dieback free areas in the Walpole Wilderness should call South Coast NRM in Walpole on (08) 9840 0426.

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