



MEDIA RELEASE

Howard Springs Nature Park

More action is underway to improve the water quality at Howard Springs Nature Park, NT Parks and Wildlife Service said today.

Parks and Wildlife Service northern region manager David West said it is hoped people will be allowed to swim at the popular swimming hole this dry season after a number of maintenance works are completed.

“We have reconditioned the bore to enable the pool to be topped up if needed late in the dry season,” Mr West said.

“The springs slowed significantly last year and an aeration system was consequently installed to assist the aquatic life.

“Large amounts of weed have been removed from the pool, repairs have been made to the weir and the sluice gate is working again.

“The gate assists in flushing the pool during periods of high rainfall and we also removed a lot of the smaller trees along the banks of the pool.

“However, further work is required to remove the bottom sludge layer that is the main cause of the bacteria problem preventing swimming.”

Mr West said removal of the weed and debris buildup is scheduled for tomorrow.

“We have secured a mulching machine and this will assist in removing a lot of the debris on the bottom as well as the weeds,” Mr West said.

“Once this is finished and settles, we intend to vacuum the remaining debris and silt using sludge pumps.

“We are also hoping for more rain this wet season, which will assist in flushing the system using the sluice gate and of course the wet season flow over the top of the weir wall.

“Tree lopping of the larger trees is also scheduled after the weed and debris machine is removed from the pool.”

Mr West said last Saturday’s *Friends of Howard Springs* public meeting outlined the program currently in place and was discussed with everyone who attended.

“I think it is fair to say everyone was keen to see things happening,” Mr West said.

“We all have the same aim and that is to get the pool back to how it was for swimming.

“The *Friends of Howard Springs* will also be involved in the forward planning for Howard Springs and this was also discussed at Saturday’s meeting.”

Mr West invited the public to next week’s community meeting at Girraween Primary School Assembly Hall to discuss the development of a longer term Plan of Management for the Howard Springs Nature Park.

“The current Plan of Management is now out of date and scheduled for review,” Mr West said.

“Community input will be an essential part of planning for the long term future of the Park to ensure the park’s best interests and the interests of the many people who enjoy going there are reflected in the new plan.

“In developing a Plan of Management, public input is sought on issues related to the current management practices, including management of the waterhole and future development of the Nature Park.

“So next week’s meeting will provide the community with the first opportunity to present its views on how it would like to see the park developed and to work together with Parks and Wildlife in formulating what we hope will be a successful plan.”

Mr West said further consultation opportunities would occur as the draft Plan of Management progresses.

He said the plan will also be made available for public comment later this year.

The February 22 public meeting at Girraween Primary School Assembly Hall starts at 6.30pm and people can call 8999 3473 for more information.

Ends

Media Note _ The media is invited to attend tomorrow morning’s 10am weed and debris removal at the Howard Springs Nature Park.

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