



## **MEDIA RELEASE**

### **Parks and Wildlife Service Geared Up For Tourist Season**

Parks and Wildlife Service rangers have dedicated the past few weeks to preparing many of the Territory's much-loved parks and reserves for this year's peak tourist season.

PWS Katherine region manager John De Koning said preparing parks and reserves was weather dependent and focused on many different attractions within particular parks and reserves.

"Not only have we dedicated many hours to crocodile surveys and trapping, but rangers across the region have been ensuring walking tracks and four-wheel-drive tracks are safe, as visitor and staff safety is our number one priority," Mr De Koning said.

"It is important that four-wheel-drive tracks are in working order, and this means clearing and marking the tracks, as well as testing them so visitors don't end up bogged for a number of days.

"With the 2006 Katherine Floods and Cyclone Monica bringing heavy rains across much of the region towards the end of the wet season, our rangers have only managed to put in the hard work in just the past few weeks."

NT parks and reserves are considered to be among the primary reasons tourists come to the Northern Territory.

Mr De Koning said the Queen's Birthday long weekend would be a great chance for Territorians and visitors to spend time in their parks.

"One place in particular that a lot of people might find interesting and enjoyable is Gregory National Park, with only the Broadarrow Track and Limestone Gorge campground road remaining closed at this stage," Mr De Koning said.

"An extensive \$100,000 makeover involving the installation of new interpretive signs and conservation work at Bullita Station Homestead Precinct and Stockyard was also recently completed, giving visitors a greater appreciation of the area.

"And the rangers at Elsey National Park have also done a great job in getting the camping area and walking tracks ready in such a short space of time, with only Stevie's Hole walking track still closed.

"Also, Nathan River and St Vidgeons road at Limmen National Park are open with care to four-wheel-drives as well as Butterfly Springs, but Southern Lost City and Nathan River (Western) Lost City remain closed."

Mr De Koning said much of the positive work was also done together with joint management partners who are the Traditional Owners of various parks and reserves.

Closer to Darwin, Litchfield National Park Chief District Ranger John McCartney said Douglas Hot Springs was recently opened for visitor use although Wangi Falls remained closed for swimming, however, all other facilities there are open.

“Not only have we removed eight crocodiles this year from traps located near Wangi Falls, the largest being a 4.2m male saltwater crocodile, the water level there remains well above the recommended safety limits,” Mr McCartney said.

Mr McCartney said natural resource management such as prescribed burning and other wildfire prevention activities were continuing and had been hampered initially due to the longer than normal wet season.

He said visitor sites within Litchfield and the District were being opened progressively when remedial road-works allowed access.

Weekly access reports are updated at <http://www.nt.gov.au/nreta/parks/access.html>

**Media Note – For more information contact John De Koning on 8973 8853 or John McCartney on 8976 0282**

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