



Marion Scrymgour

MINISTER FOR ENVIRONMENT AND HERITAGE

October 31 2006

Oenpelli Python Set to Benefit from MOU

The little-known Oenpelli Python will benefit from a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) recently signed in the US by the Territory Wildlife Park (TWP) and National Aquarium in Baltimore (NAIB).

Environment Minister Marion Scrymgour said the NT Government is currently finalising a draft plan aimed at developing a conservation program to protect the vulnerable Oenpelli Python.

Ms Scrymgour said the NT Government will work closely with the Northern Land Council, west Arnhem Land traditional owners to learn more about the life history and conservation of the Oenpelli Python.

She said the proposed Oenpelli Python conservation program has been made possible through a \$5000 donation from NAIB that now enjoys a sister zoo relationship with TWP as part of the MOU.

“The aim of the project is to better understand the life history of this large terrestrial predator, develop a breeding program and husbandry manual to assist in maintaining them in captivity,” Ms Scrymgour.

Ms Scrymgour said that the Territory Wildlife Park is the only institution where the Oenpelli Python has been held in captivity and the scant body of knowledge known of this species’ life history is held by the TWP.

She said displaying the Oenpelli Python alongside other Northern Territory pythons such as the Olive Python and Black-headed Python at NAIB was a long-term aim if the conservation program proves successful.

“The Oenpelli Python would certainly fit in well with the *Animal Planet Australia: Wild Extremes* display that is a new feature at NAIB that played a vital role in securing the MOU between TWP and NAIB,” she said.

The MOU includes provisions whereby TWP agrees to supply NAIB with specimens through approved breeding programs to complement the Wild Extremes display.

Contact: Maria Billias 0401 119 746