



MEDIA RELEASE

Howard Springs Nature Park Closed To Swimming

Northern Territory Parks and Wildlife Service advises the Howard Springs Nature Park is closed to swimming.

Parks and Wildlife Service Senior District Ranger Kristen Appel said maintenance work would be conducted at the waterhole and surrounding area during the closure.

Ms Appel said maintenance work would include the removal of debris and bacteria from the water as well as the removal of leaves from the water's edge.

She said today's closure comes after recent heavy rain increased the amount of nutrients, sediment and bacteria being washed into the waterhole from the surrounding area.

"The heavy rains also stir the bottom of the waterhole, releasing bacteria stored in the sediments and detritus on the bottom of the waterhole," she said.

"Bacteria levels have been well below the acceptable 1000 organisms per 100ml of water since the start of last dry season but the latest weekly test result revealed the current level is at 1700 organisms per 100ml, which is higher than what is accepted for safe swimming.

"Closures such as the one we are experiencing are normal for this time of year and the waterhole will remain closed until four of the next five readings fall back below the accepted standard of 1000 organisms per 100ml.

"We will be pumping the detritus from the bottom of the waterhole and pumping out as much of the bacteria and other debris as we possibly can, as well as removing leaves from along the water's edge.

"The Northern Territory Parks and Wildlife Service is committed to maintaining the Howard Springs Nature Park in the best possible condition and this maintenance work will assist in allowing the waterhole to be re-opened sooner rather than later."

Ms Appel reminded Territorians they have until 9 February 2007 to log onto www.nt.gov.au/howardspringsplan to read the Howard Springs Draft Plan of Management and provide feedback.

She said that not only does the Draft Plan recognise the importance of protecting and interpreting the Park's natural and cultural values, it also focuses on maintaining the water quality in and near the waterhole and spring, which are key attractions.

There will be further opportunity for public input before the Plan of Management is finalised and the public comment period closes.

Ends

Media Note – For more information contact Kristen Appel on 0439 887 124

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