

National Recognition for Athel Pine Achievements

Mr John Stretch, Carnarvon WA was recognised by the National Athel Pine Management Committee this week with a Community Recognition Award for his outstanding management efforts on this Weed of National Significance over the last two decades.

As a member of the Carnarvon Land Conservation District Committee, John has been instrumental in progressing best practice management of athel pine in the Lower Gascoyne River and the Carnarvon township. In a voluntary capacity, John, and his wife Jean, have spent many hours pulling seedlings from the sandy river bed, poisoning bigger trees, trialling better techniques and training others to do some of this work.

“John has been instrumental in keeping the management of this weed on the local agenda,” said Dave Bauer, past President of the CLCDC who presented the award during a morning tea with colleagues from the Committee and staff from the Carnarvon office of the Department of Agriculture and Food (DAFWA).

“The Shire of Carnarvon, Department of Water, DAFWA, Rangelands NRM, local schools, industry and landowners have all been involved in the staged removal of the planted athel pines and treatment of those that have become weedy. John has ensured that the potential impacts are not forgotten.”

Chairman of the national committee that selected John Stretch for the award, Mr Jim Forwood, sent his congratulations to John and added “We

need champions like John to ensure that on-ground control of issues such as weeds is maintained and impacts on the environment lessened.”

John Stretch after receiving his award from Dave Bauer.



Athel pine has the potential to block the channel of the Gascoyne River through a build up of sediment resulting in bank erosion and possible destruction of infrastructure within the Carnarvon township. The natural recharge of water used for the Carnarvon horticulture industry would be altered with increase in soil salinity and decline in native vegetation along the river.

In receiving the award, John Stretch was typically modest stating that “This award recognises the work that the entire LCDC has done over the years”.

The national athel pine initiative receives funding support through the Caring for Our Country program Further information is available at:

www.weeds.org.au/WoNS/athelpine,
08 89519213 or kay.bailey@nt.gov.au.

John Stretch (centre front) with wife Jean; members of the Carnarvon Land Conservation District Committee; and staff of DAFWA. 2 June 2011.



*Back Row (left to right): Alex Harper (Dustup Environmental Project Services); Les George (Carnarvon LCDC member); Brad Cox (Department of Water); Dave Bauer (Arid Landscapes – past President CLCDC); Charles Brown (Shire of Carnarvon); Alan Higgins (Department of Agriculture and Food - DAFWA).
Front row (left to right): Kaz Johnson (DAFWA); Jean Stretch (John's wife); John Stretch with national award; Linda Hina (DAFWA); Valerie Shrubbs (DAFWA); Karen Brosman (DAFWA); Michael Allingame (DAFWA); Dave Evans (DAFWA).*