

Tuesday 31 October 2006

Koreans visit Kooragang Wetlands

An important delegation from the South Korean Ministry of Environment will be visiting Kooragang Wetlands tomorrow (Wednesday 1st November), to learn about the important wetland conservation work being undertaken at Kooragang Wetlands.

Kooragang Wetland Rehabilitation Project (KWRP) Manager, Ms Peggy Svoboda explained that the group of fourteen delegates, which includes researchers and officers from the Ministry of Environment, National Institute of Environmental Research, and regional and river environmental offices are visiting to learn from the Hunter-Central Rivers CMA and KWRPs experiences of working with estuarine wetlands over the last twelve years.

‘This is the second visit of Korean delegates to Kooragang Wetlands, and the forth visit to the Lower Hunter this year,’ Ms Svoboda observed. ‘While many issues are similar in the two countries the Koreans are always amazed at the high level of community involvement that our project attracts and the enormity of the conservation works undertaken at the wetlands.’

‘Close to 100 volunteers regularly get involved in a range of projects from monitoring plants and animals on the site, to university students studying various aspects of wetland ecology, to site maintenance, gardening at Kooragang City Farm and tree planting. The project also attracts visits by school and other groups who can enjoy the boardwalks and other facilities whilst learning about wetland conservation.’

Tour coordinator Jamie An said she chose Kooragang Wetlands, due to the diversity of issues and experiences available at the site.

‘We want to learn all about wetlands in NSW, how they are preserved and managed,’ explained Ms An. ‘We are particularly interested in water improvement measures in major rivers’.

‘The Hunter seems to be managing its wetlands as well as developing considerable industrial areas. We are interested in how to achieve a balance between industry and the environment.’

‘We have heard good things about what has been happening in the Hunter River estuary at Kooragang and we are keen to learn from this Newcastle experience.’

The Kooragang Wetland Rehabilitation Project is rehabilitating fisheries and other wildlife habitat in suitable areas of the Hunter River estuary, while at the same time creating educational, research and recreational opportunities for people. KWRP is a collaborative project of the Hunter-Central Rivers Catchment Management Authority.

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For more information contact: KWRP Project Manager, Peggy Svoboda phone (02) 4964 9308, mobile 0418 649 308, KWRP Communications Officer Sue Rostas phone (02) 4964 9308, mobile 0419 019 662.

Photo opportunity: See next page for details.

Photo opportunity:

The South Korean delegation will be available for photographs at between 11.30am and noon. At that time they will be viewing Kooragang Wetlands universally acclaimed Mangrove Boardwalk for a photo opportunity. Following that they will be lunching then touring the Ash Island site of Kooragang Wetlands, thence Stockton Sandspit to view the masses of birds roosting at high tide.

Major contributors to the Kooragang Wetland Rehabilitation Project currently are:

Hunter-Central Rivers Catchment Management Authority
NSW Department of Natural Resources
Newcastle City Council
Kooragang Landcare Volunteers
Port Stephens Council
NSW Department of Primary Industries
NSW Department of Environment and Conservation
Port Waratah Coal Services
Energy Australia
Landcare/PriceWaterhouseCooper
Banrock Station

