

Adelaide celebrates World Parks Day

To celebrate World Parks Day on 20th September, the Department for Environment and Heritage (DEH) is launching the 2008 *October is Parks Month* events calendar, along with a free *South Australia's National Parks Guide*.

Both are designed to highlight the many attractions and activities the state's national parks have to offer.

World Parks Day seeks to emphasize the importance of parks in the global environment and promote a greater appreciation of green spaces, in and around our urban centres.

According to Greg Leaman, Director of National Parks and Wildlife, research has shown spending time in the natural environment can restore balance in our lives, reduce stress levels, improve our mental wellbeing and supports a better quality of life.

"Spring is the perfect time for South Australians to explore, experience and discover our beautiful national parks and botanic gardens," he said.

Parks Month promotes more than 20 free and low-cost community activities, many within 30 minutes drive of the city. The public can enjoy guided bush and nature walks, historical recreations and community picnics in the park.

On Thursdays throughout October guided nature walks will be conducted in the Mount Lofty Botanic Gardens when the spectacular displays of rhododendrons are at their best.

For those who want to be more active, discover new walking trails on a guided bushwalk in Shepherd's Hill and Sturt Gorge recreation parks on Sunday 12th and 19th October respectively.

From the 'Barossa Goldfields Historical Open Day' at Para Wirra Recreation Park to the 'Parks Alive Picnics in the Park' at Belair National Park and Morialta Conservation Park, the diverse program is sure to keep the entire family happy.

South Australia boasts an extensive and comprehensive parks system with over 300 reserves encompassing more than 20% of the state.

Within these reserves you'll find ancient landscapes and fossils, rugged coastlines and mountain ranges as well as the state's unique plants and animals – things that many South Australians often don't come across in their day-to-day lives.

Mr Leaman said the *South Australia's National Parks Guide* is an invaluable planning tool for both domestic and international visitors.

"If you're looking for somewhere new to explore on the weekend or plan to

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head further a field this spring, the *South Australia's National Parks Guide* is the perfect place to start your journey," he said.

"The guide showcases almost 80 parks across eight tourism regions in the state, highlighting unique attractions and great destinations for camping, walking and enjoying the outdoors."

Both the events calendar and *South Australia's National Parks Guide* can be accessed via DEH's website www.parks.sa.gov.au or by phoning the DEH information line on (08) 8204 1910. Copies of the new guide are also available from the South Australian Visitor and Travel Centre at 18 King William St, Adelaide and will soon be available in regional Visitor Information Centres across the state.

