

SAVANNAH GUIDES

Communicator



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FEBRUARY 2007

Next Savannah Guide School—Cape York

Date Claimer:

The week beginning 29th October 2007 promises to be an interesting and exciting opportunity for Savannah Guides members and supporters to explore some of the attractions of the



Cape York Peninsula. The second Savannah Guides School of the year will be a mobile event focussed on the town of Coen and covering ground between Jowalbinna and Moreton Telegraph Station. We will be working closely with Scott Templeton of AQIS in Coen, Jim Fitzgerald (SGL Board Member) at Moreton and the Wilderness Challenge team at Jowalbinna to make this an event to remember. More information will be sent to members and posted on the website as the program develops. Meanwhile we hope to see you at the Kakadu school after Easter.

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SAVANNAH GUIDES

Savannah Guides is a network of professional tour guides with a collective in-depth knowledge of the natural and cultural assets of Northern Australia.

It is a not-for-profit company with enterprise and individual members. Savannah Guides works with many of Australia's leading tourism, environmental and community organisations to pursue its mission.

Being an economically sound, community based, professional body maintaining high standards of: Interpretation and public education - Training and guiding leadership - Natural and cultural resource management and through the promotion of ecologically sustainable tourism principles, enhances regional lifestyles and encourages protection and conservation of the natural and cultural resources of the Tropical Savannas of Northern Australia.



Nature Notes

Has Bart found scientific fame?

No, it's not Savannah Guide Bart (Greg Johnston). The person in question is Bart Currie, a professor at the Menzies School of Health Research in Darwin, who has recently had a new species of multi-tentacled box jellyfish named after him - *Chiropsella bart*.

Stats (of the jelly fish):

Location – common to the Nhulunbuy and Arnhemland region

Season – Dry season – opposite to other box jellies

Size – about the same as a tennis ball

Hazard – not life threatening but mass stinging could be serious on young children

First sample taken in 1986 (in Gove) with ongoing research

(Jan/Feb sightings only)

I see the light!

During Jan/Feb a bright comet could be seen on the horizon at sunrise and sunset. Comet McNaught was named after astronomer Robert McNaught from the Australian National University (ANU) who discovered the comet on August 7, 2006. The comet should come as near as 25.4 million km from the Sun at the peak of its brightness, which made it dozens of times as bright as Venus. This was hyped to be the most spectacular comet in 40 years (I wonder if it is suffering from the biggest and best syndrome . (A phoopar of interpretation!)

SGL MERCHANDISE AVAILABLE

The Board of SGL have agreed to foster the use of our SGL branding for use on a range of merchandising; Recommend supplier 'Fraser Products' - Propose to use official full green logo with web address added and 'Protectors and Interpreters of the Outback'.

SGL are supplying Fraser Products with an electronic version of the correct logo and have authorised stock lines for branding and sale by supplier to members and enterprises.

The supplier will set RRP for us to retail products to our guests. There will be an 8% surcharge levied of total sales of all SGL branded lines sold by the supplier to us that will go to SGL following each selling period.

Savannah Guides are to promote sales on Savannah Guides Website with supplier on-line catalogue, listing authorized Savannah Guides sale items. Orders Submitted twice yearly to Fraser Products. Catalogue is available on-line at www.fraserproducts.com.au. Hard copies of the brochure are available from Ralph Fraser at, phone 0732791741 fax 0723792558 Orders can be submitted at the same contact numbers Payment arrangements need to be made directly with Ralph Fraser.



**Foundation Partner
& Supporter**

SAVANNAH GUIDES



Protectors and Interpreters of the Outback
Savannah Guides School – 12th – 15th April 2007, Kakadu NP

Major Sponsors of this event



Australian Government
Director of National Parks



Significant Sponsors of this event



TOURISM NT
NORTHERN TERRITORY
AUSTRALIA

Savannah Guides, the internationally acclaimed not-for-profit “*Protectors and Interpreters of the Outback*” organisation are holding their next Guide School at **Djarradjin Billabong (home of Kakadu Culture Camp) in Kakadu National Park, from 12th to 15th April 2007.**

We gratefully acknowledge our Major Sponsors, Energy Resources of Australia and the Director of National Parks and our Significant Sponsors, Gagudju Dreaming-Yellow Water Cruises, Tourism Australia and Tourism NT for their contribution to making this event possible.

The theme of the April 2007 event is “Connecting with the Cultural Landscape” and the major focus will be on engagement with the Bininj (aboriginal) owned tour operations in Kakadu, including Kakadu Culture Camp, Murdudjurl, Wurrng Cultural Walk and Yellow Water Cruise.

Mr Jacob Nayinggul, Chairman of the Kakadu NP Board of Management will officially open the event and Hon Marion Scrymgour, NT Minister for Parks & Wildlife will deliver the opening address to the assembled delegates. Presenters will cover topics as diverse as traditional fire management methods, crocodile management, geology & mining (including a presentation from the Environmental Research Institute of the Supervising Scientist) and a session traditional Bininj plant uses. Delegates will be treated to two cruises to explore a Kakadu waterway by day at Yellow Water and by night on Djarradjin Billabong. We will visit Mandy Muir’s business at Murdudjurl and experience her cultural tour program and be guided around the world famous art sites at Burrungui (Nourlangie Rock) by local expert Guides.

We have also organised **First Aid Courses**, both Senior and Remote Area, to be run the days prior to the event. This will be on 10th & 11th April. Prices are \$330 for full Remote Area, \$180 for a Refresher and \$88 for a Senior Refresher. Booking can be made when registering for the school.

This event will bring together people committed to Australia’s Tropical Savannas from Cairns across to Broome, including tourism businesses, guides themselves, environmental specialists, land managers, traditional landowners, government decision makers and other interested parties.

Members and non-members are welcome to attend and for enquiries should contact us by email at info@savannah-guides.com.au Registration forms will be available at www.savannah-guides.com.au soon.

Wilderness Challenge reopens Jowalbinna

The world renowned Jowalbinna Bush Camp reopens in April 2007 for tour groups and self-drive visitors. The greatest concentration of rock art in Queensland will once again be accessible, with guided tours to the most significant and spectacular sites. Jowalbinna station was the home of Percy Trezise, renowned artist, pilot and author who rediscovered much of the Quinkan rock art, rated by UNESCO as among the top 10 rock art regions in the world.

Some great swimming holes and a range of activities will be offered to re-establish Jowalbinna as one of Cape York's most popular destinations. Refurbished bush cabins, a dormitory and campsites by the creek will be available for tour groups and independent visitors.

A new weekly 3 Day Rock Art & Rainforest Safari from Wilderness Challenge includes Jowalbinna, Daintree rainforest tree planting for cassowary conservation, an Aboriginal guided waterfall walk, 4wd adventure and bush cabin accommodation.

Wilderness Challenge intends to bring Jowalbinna to a standard that can achieve Savannah Guide Station status, and feature the venue in the November 2007 School.

For further information please contact Russell Boswell (russell@wilderness-challenge.com.au)



Dinosaur update

Some little facts I found! It been another successful Dinosaur Dig - Not as good as the past ones, but never the less still an amazing outcome for the finding of our prehistoric friends! With the confirmation of finding theropods (like T-rex) and they have found more Sauropod bones in a different site called 'Bob South'!! It's amazing! The first week was interesting as no bones were found for about 4 days or so and then on the 5th day they finally found some. Like a rib about 1.9 metres long!! The biggest so far I do beleive and at the seiving machine they found some beautiful specimens of dinosaur teeth!(Possible theropod, but dont hold me to that) (I have attached a photo of them) This is an amazing find - also two perfect snail shells have been found. Also something else which was a national blurr!! The meteorite hit Western Queensland the day before April fools day last year!

Well some of it has been found by the same man who found the first dinosaur and largest dinosaur bone, Dave Elliott. The meteorite will be stored at QLD Museum for safety purposes until the new museum is built outside Winton.



Protecting the Outback

2006 saw Gecko Canoeing become involved with a couple of environmental projects. One of the projects which has seen an increase in participation and commitment for 2007 is the contribution to site protection, specifically for biodiversity conservation.

Those that were at the April 2006 'Mary River Park' school, may remember a project being conducted for the protection of the endangered 'Yellow-snouted' gecko (*Diplodactylus Occultus*). This project has expanded to include the search for areas to establish 'privately managed' safe sites for general and endangered species in the Katherine Area.

We have enjoyed the opportunity to help locate potential sites and then be involved in nocturnal searches for various species of reptile, dragon flies and mammals.

These sites will be monitored and managed to protect them from practices such as inappropriate and excessive fire regimes and invasive weeds and/or pasture grasses, all of which have a negative effect on the natural biodiversity.

Gecko has contributed in-kind support, human resources and financial assistance to support these projects. We are extremely happy to be contributing at this level to the protection of natural assets of the 'outback'.

Our other projects (some in development) are;

- ✦ Water quality monitoring – Katherine/Flora/Daly Rivers
- ✦ Weed monitoring in the riparian zones, (noogoora burr and Neem tree)
- ✦ Water table observation (recharge areas)
- ✦ River familiarization activities for the local Landcare management group
- ✦ Site Environmental impact observation workshops for the same group.

Organisational and customer off-set of carbon emission scheme.

I would be interested in hearing about what other organisations are doing as the 'Protectors of the Outback'.

SGL Sub-committees

You are invited to express interest in joining one of Savannah Guides Sub Committees. The workload is not onerous and it can help you to get involved in the work of the organisation and keep in touch with what's going on. For those of you thinking of promotion to Savannah Guide, it is a good way of demonstrating your commitment to the organisation. The Committees are:

Membership - Chaired by Dean Nulty

Marketing - Chaired by Alan Smith

Training - Chaired by Vicki Jones

Land Management - Chaired by Jim Fitzgerald

Communication - Chaired by Jodie Tanswell

If you are interested, please our office know at info@savannah-guides.com.au or contact the Chairperson of the sub - committee directly.

THE VOICE OF THE BUSH.

Just a short story to amuse all those guides and others out there who at times wish there was an open season on people (if you can call them that!) who prefer the serenity of the bush rather than the rubbish tip to dump their rubbish.

The full moon of November '06 saw me out and about nearby to my home in Darwin's rural area trying to catch the anticipated glory photo of the moon rising amongst my favorite group of ghost gums (E. papuana for the nerds!). Skip forward a half hour and I was still waiting, it is now on dark. Down the track towards me come an illegal trail biker and his mate following, guiding him in the dark with his headlights. I have a chuckle as I realised they have stayed out too long and are now crawling home in the dark.

I crouch down beside the track as they pass as I don't wish to meet these sort of undesirables. Seemingly for my amusement the trail biker stalls his bike right in front of me and proceeds to furiously kick his bike and swear. He gets going again as his mate in a ute then also stops right in front of me for an obviously hard earned 'comfort stop'.

I am still incognito all but 2-3m from this young bloke as he finishes his business and proceeds to turf what I assume are numerous rubbish bags from his ute into what he assumes is the 'out of sight' bush. Numerous thoughts cross my mind at this point as my blood begins to boil at actually witnessing such flagrant disregard for the environment.

So, from the cover of near darkness in my best tough guy voice I tell this scum in no uncertain terms that he should retrieve his rubbish and please leave the area. I gave him rough directions to the tip, so suggesting several alternatives I could arrange on the spot if he thought that was too hard. I have never seen someone move so fast to correct their errors! Just as he was about to leave I asked him what it was he was dumping. "Oh, Umm." (his voice shaking) "It's just some Magpie Geese. They've been out too long!" The 'voice of the bush' suggested in no uncertain terms that he should think about that next time he went out shooting.

To quote a Ben Harper song. "So I'm taking the Mr from out in front of your name, because it's Mr like you that puts the rest of us to shame". Bring on the open season!

Andy Mortimer. 'Guided By Nature Specialist Private Tours'

National Tour Guide Accreditation

Guiding Members, have you put in your application for the national tour guide accreditation – Guides of Australia?

- How much? \$25
- Until When? End April 2007
- Then What? You can still apply but pay \$50
- What don't I have to do? Field Evaluation, Referee Checks, Tour Plan
- What do I have to do? Fill in the application form, provide certificates, a resume and a photo
- As a member of Savannah Guides what does this give me? A shortcut to the national accreditation, a chance to link with tour guides and operators in other regions and the chance to be involved in issues affecting all tour guides in all regions of Australia.

Where to get info? www.goa.org.au or phone the SGL GOA rep - Vicki Jones on 0409 045 174



Savannah GuideTalk - Townsville November 2006

The following notes are taken from a talk given by **Pop Sullivan**, a long time tour operator and supporter who provided a very good tour of a recreation dam near Townsville during the guide school.

We had a BBQ, plenty of social interaction and heaps of stories. Pop had his karaoke fired-up which provided fine competition for the usual camp fire strummers. (Yes Manual also made a brief attendance also)! Pop's talk;

For the last 13 years and multi awards later, there are still two things I am very aware of and that is.....

1) WHO'S TOUR IS IT ANYWAY? 2) WHO DETERMINES WHAT A SUCCESSFUL TOUR IS??

Who's tour is it anyway?

I have learnt, because I've been told enough times by my passengers to just give it a break for a while. Ok I was enthusiastic about telling my people as much as I could about all that I know...me, me, me, I'm still keen to tell all but I now realize that the tour is not centered around me only, it does have something to do with my passengers!

Have you ever stopped and thought as to why they would spend their hard earned money with your company and then maybe end up with you as their guide.... For how long? That could be a scary thought!

Who's tour is it anyway?

Maybe your passengers would like to do a little discovering for themselves?

Ok, lets look on it this way, you're their way of getting to where ever the tour goes but have you ever honed in as to why they came. If they came to look at birds and your full of everything else, guess what...

Somebody's not happy....

I ma not saying to give a question paper as to why they came, but I am saying give them a chance to maybe tell you what their interests are... maybe they wont, but at least listen to what they are saying.

Remember everyone loves to hear their own voice. Not just yours. I find it very hard to listen, when I am yapping. If you could satisfy all your passengers needs, I mean, as to why they came, then Wacko... You have just nailed a good tour in everyone's book!!

Who's tour is it anyway?

Quietly look at who you have on the bus. You might be pleasantly surprised who you may have and how much they know and that they would like to share their knowledge. Remember your information is only as good as the source you received it from. Bad source = Your wrong. I'll tell you something, it is not a pretty sight to be shown up.

A golden rule in any tour is, don't over burden them with information. Whether its an extended tour or a 2 Hour tour. If you have to, just state the obvious facts and move on. Interested people will always ask questions anyway, and this will gauge how long your commentary should be.

Do they (your bread and butter) want to know all you may know? Don't be the tour operator from hell!

Just be your happy pleasant self, and be aware if they are listening at all, who's tour is it anyway? Remember, it's theirs.

2) Who determines what a successful tour is?

Well, over the past 13 years of doing tours throughout Australia, (and mind you I could never afford them myself... so the next best thing is to have someone pay me to take them with me), I have built up quite a following of happy people. How do I know they are happy? Well at least they come back and do plenty of other tours with me. Is this a good yard stick? I think so.

Now I have not done all the courses nor have the knowledge that some people may have . But there are some things that should have been taught to you in childhood and to be remembered at all times. Three of these are: Manners, Presentation, Attitude. Do badly in any of these three and you are in trouble. And so is your boss.

Now, you may not be the boss (of the business). You'll get your wages anyway (while you're employed anyway). You may be the guide, but never try and get away with "it" while you are in the publics eye, even people with bi-focals can see you stuff up and if you do stuff up, don't be too proud to fix it up.

Who determines what a successful tour is.... Your passengers. |

Word does get back, make sure its good. I remember a cartoon of Goofy when he was dressed up in his uniform he was 10 ft tall and bullet proof and a mongrel as well. But when he was dressed only in his own clothes he became mister nice guy, wouldn't stand on an ant. Does this ring a bell with you? I don't know how many people I've come across with this problem. Question: What is the difference between a bus driver and a coach captain? Answer: The bus driver sells and collects tickets, a coach captain has all the tickets pinned to his shirt, some of you may fit this bill.

Try this... dress not in uniform for a day (this is presentation) and run the tour as normal. (get the OK from the Boss first). When I have done this I have found that it wasn't the uniform talking with authority it became my personality, (this is attitude) , suddenly I didn't have anything to hide behind, suddenly I was one of "them", (this is manners), suddenly I had to try a little harder to keep it together, (back to attitude again).

I quickly learnt that the uniform is not the be all and end all, I'm not saying its not important because it dam well is. Just remember it's who wears the uniform that matters.

Who determines what a successful tour is. Your boss, you and who helped train you.

And last, what ever you do, deliver. Deliver what is on the agenda and if you can't then make sure you have a good reason. I was once running a Central Australian Tour down the Birdsville Track to the Flinders Ranges area and back via Innamincka. Well because of rain I wasn't able to deliver (a good reason) the total package and so we missed out on going to Innamincka. The passengers complained bitterly well after the tour finished to another person and eventually word came back to me that the person complaining dearly wanted to get a fridge magnet of Innamincka to show the world that she had been there (she'd been on one of my previous trips and forgotten to buy one...

It's sometimes a good thing to listen.. Now it so happened that I was scheduled to return to the same area on another tour and guess what, I brought every type of fridge magnet available of Inna bloodymincka when I eventually got there and duly presented them to her on return. Moral of story, deliver. Boy, was it sweet!

Some of my own thoughts on better tour guiding in Australia;

On Aboriginal Matters:

Let them tell their own story, in their own way. It's their own story not yours! Be careful it's a touchy area.

On History Matters:

If you weren't at "that" place in "that" time be very careful in giving your own interpretation of what may have occurred. Think of Ned Kelly, read all the books you like about him and you'll end up with all the stories about him, but which is right? Remember your only reading someone's story . But it was " Neds"

State the true and known facts , then move on.

On Ancient History Matters:

None of us where there and nobody was keeping dates, if its old, its old. Why tell some poor tourist that its 1.3 million years old when...

- a) none of us where there and
- b) which rock was carbon dated and was it the right one?
- c) does anybody care, and not only that, can anybody relate to your fantastic date?

There are very intelligent people out there who believe that the world is only a few thousand years old, (approx 6000) are you going to upset them on "their tour" by saying its 200 000 years old.

Probably you will, Is it worth it (when you weren't even there) probably not.

On land formation matters:

There are mainly two sides to it. The obvious and the theory. I like to state and talk about the obvious, the one that makes sense, as for the theory. Where you there?

From the Book Shelf

The Rise and Fall of the Third Chimpanzee by Jared Diamond

Diamond's hypothesis is simple, and factually based. Although it is cried down by all but the most open-minded biologists, and disdained utterly by the fundamentalist religious, the fact remains that genetically we are little more than bald chimps - chimpanzees are more closely related to us than they are to gorillas, indeed, than are a great number of very similar species to one another. There's only a 0.02% difference in our genes, and it's that tiny fraction that separates us from our hirsute brethren in only minimal ways. Language, tool use, social structure, even murder, rape and substance abuse all have their origins in the shape of our ancestors.

Diamond's is truly a remarkable mind, and he combines his grasp of genetics and conservation biology with keen observational skills derived from bird-watching into an erudite and cogent work that I would classify as essential for anyone with an interest in human origins and development.

Guns, Germs and Steel by Jared Diamond

Guns, Germs and Steel is nothing less than an enquiry into the reasons why Europe and the Near East became the cradle of modern societies – eventually giving rise to capitalism and science – and why, until recent times, Africa, Australasia and the Americas lagged behind in technological sophistication and in political and military power. The native peoples of those continents are still suffering the consequences.

Diamond shows definitively that the origins of this inequality in human fortunes cannot be laid at the door of race or inherent features of the people themselves. He argues that the inequality stems instead from the differing natural resources available to the people of each continent.

An ambitious synthesis of history, biology, ecology and linguistics, *Guns, Germs and Steel* is one of the most important and humane works of popular science to have appeared since the Second World War.

“Diamond’s sideways-on view of human development may well establish its author as one of the very few scientists to have changed the way we think about history.”

Graham Farmelo, *Sunday Telegraph*

The basic message the preceding authors are relaying, if we listen, take their advice and act now, may save us from extinction. But enough doom and gloom. The following book contains a story of discovery and adventure and are a bloody good read.

Longitude by Dava Sobel

Longitude is the dramatic human story of an epic scientific quest. The ‘longitude problem’ was the thorniest dilemma of the eighteenth century. Lacking the ability to measure longitude, sailors throughout the great ages of exploration had been literally lost at sea.

At the heart of Dava Sobel’s fascination brief history of astronomy, navigation and horology stands the figure of John Harrison, self-taught Yorkshire clockmaker, and his forty-year obsession with building the perfect timekeeper. Battling against the establishment, Harrison stood alone in pursuit of his solution and the £20,000 reward offered by Parliament.

“There is nothing quite like the delicious pleasure of a good book. Dava Sobel’s *Longitude* has it all: enthralling story, lovely language, a handsome production. It tells the story of what was once a most important problem. It is a book that we should all read.” *Irish Times*

Jobs, Your skills are sought

Interpretation & Events Co-ordinator, Mornington Wildlife Sanctuary,

Central Kimberley, WA Australian Wildlife Conservancy (AWC)

Australian Wildlife Conservancy (AWC) is a non-profit organisation dedicated to the conservation of Australia's threatened wildlife. Mornington Sanctuary is the largest of AWC's 15 properties and is a showpiece for ecological research and conservation in the Kimberley. Visitor accommodation and facilities are provided at the Mornington Wilderness Camp. We are seeking an Interpretation and Events Co-ordinator to provide an interpretive link between the research and conservation program and all visitors to Mornington. To provide this critical role you will need excellent natural history skills and the ability to communicate effectively, including the delivery of audio-visual presentations to groups. A keen interest in conservation, and in sharing this interest with others, is an essential requirement for this position. Visitor access to Mornington is limited to the period April to October. Options for other duties during the off-season will depend on specific skills and experience and will be discussed with short-listed applicants at interview. Salary: approximately \$36,000 on an annual basis, depending on experience. Accommodation and meals will be provided on site at Mornington. Start date: April, 2007.

Position description available at <http://www.australianwildlife.org>

Enquiries and applications to: Richard Taylor, Sanctuary Operations

Manager, Mornington Wildlife Sanctuary, richard@australianwildlife.org (08-9191-7014).

Adel's Grove

Rod & Michelle Low Mow spoke with passion at the Townsville School about needing a range of staff.

UndaraExperience

Call Jodee on 0740971422—She has opportunities for guides and other positions starting for Easter and the winter season