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West Australian, Perth

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OBITUARIES

EDITED BY
ROD MORAN

Eco-tourism advocate

SUSAN MOORE

Environmental scientist
Born: Finley, NSW, 1960
Died: Perth, aged 56

Professor Susan (Sue) Moore was an environmental scientist who was regarded as an expert voice in natural-area tourism, both in Australia and overseas.

She was the eldest of three daughters born to Neil Moore, an academic at the University of Sydney who conducted the first successful transfer of frozen embryos in sheep, and Noel Moore, who graduated as a biochemist. She grew up in Jerilderie and then Camden until she moved to Armidale to study at the University of New England.

A first-class honours graduate in Natural Resources from the School of Natural Resources at the University of New England, Professor Moore joined the former WA Department of Fisheries and Wildlife in 1982 as its first female scientist. Community participation in the planning process — a new concept at the time — was integral to her role in helping develop the first nature reserve and national park management plans for the Perth metropolitan area and surrounds.

Moving to the Department of Conservation and Land Management, Professor Moore became involved in surveying flora and fauna, ensuring ecological knowledge was included in field activities such as prescribed burning, weed control and development of roads and trails.

Her skills came to the fore when developing the management plan for the World Heritage-listed Fitzgerald River National Park, one of the largest and most botanically significant national parks in Australia. This work became an integral part of her PhD in natural resource sociology in the College of Forest Resources, University of Washington, where as a prestigious Harkness Fellow from 1991-94, she compared park planning in WA with that of the US.

Her research was also supported by a CALM executive director's scholarship, the US Department of Agriculture (Forest Service) Pacific Northwest Research Station at Portland, Oregon and the Commonwealth Fund, New York.

On her return from the US she developed the first directory of nature-based tourism opportunities on WA's conservation lands.

Her academic career at Murdoch University began in 1995 and spanned 21 years. She was the co-founder and leader of the university's Nature Based Tourism Research Group, using her practical experience as a park planner and scientist to create and develop this undergraduate unit. She was made a professor in 2013.

With her close colleagues, she established an international research reputation in areas such as eco-tourism, visitor experiences in protected areas, measuring and managing visitor

impacts, and understanding and managing interactions between wildlife and tourists.

She championed social research and its important role in protected area management. Her continuing motivation was her belief that parks needed visitors in order to gain advocates and community and political support.

University research projects co-ordinated by Professor Moore included governance of protected areas, improving ecosystem-based management of the Vasse Wonnerup Estuary; assessing the visitor experience swimming with humpback whales; visitor profiles and activities for the Pilbara islands; and human values and aspirations for coastal waters of the Kimberley.

A keen exercise and outdoors enthusiast, Professor Moore showed great talent at orienteering, which at one time had her as State champion in both WA and Washington State in the US. According to her sister Terry, the Washington orienteering community was rather put out that some Aussie ring-in had been able to overcome a lack of familiarity with the local terrain and take out this title. "Sue was never afraid to set herself a goal and then exceed it," she said.

Professor Moore, who died on December 22, was highly regarded by her peers as an innovative multi-disciplinary researcher. Her research

coupled well considered theory with work of a great practical



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value in nature tourism management.

She was prolific, publishing more than 100 articles, papers, reports and books, co-authoring two editions of the popular *Natural Area Tourism: Ecology, Impacts and Management and Wildlife Tourism*. She contributed to environmental policy development through membership of the WA Bushcare Reference Group, WA Natural Resource Management Council, and the WA State Salinity Reference Group, and as an expert evaluator for the WA Premier's Awards.

The recipient of a number of awards for her research and teaching achievements at Murdoch University, including the Vice-Chancellor's Award for Excellence in Research in 2012, Professor Moore was responsible for supervising and lecturing thousands of students in environmental science, nature-based tourism and protected area management.

She mentored and inspired many students who went on to be successful conservation managers, resource agency staff and academics.

These former students, many of whom received her support long after her postgraduate supervision role ended, and her body of work over a distinguished career, are her enduring legacies in environmental science.

Sue Moore is survived by her husband Warren, children Jess and Sam, sisters Terry and Miranda and father Neil.

Jim Sharp



Susan Moore coupled theory with work of great practical value.