

# **RAPID CREEK**

## **(GURAMIBAI)**

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### **EDUCATION PROJECT**



**Greening Australia™**

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS:**

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Sean Heffernan (Greening Australia NT)  
November '92

The Rapid Creek (*Gurambai*) Education Project is produced with the assistance of the Commonwealth Government and the Australian National Parks and Wildlife Service through the one Billion Trees and Save The Bush programs..

Principal Education Officer  
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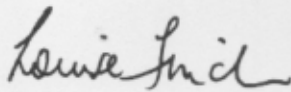
# FOREWORD

The Rapid Creek (*Gurumbai*) education Project materials are a timely addition to a growing collection of environmental education resources which focuses on the Northern Territory examples. Following extensive consultation with Larrakia people, scientists and teachers, Greening Australia has produced a valuable teaching resource. This project gives secondary teachers of English and Social Education very practical ideas on how to incorporate learning about Rapid Creek into their teaching programs.

Urban natural bushland sites such as Rapid Creek system are fragile and increasingly subject to disturbance. The successful management of such sites will more likely in the future if effective environmental education can be included in everybody's school experiences.

Successful teaching programs based on this project will encourage learning in the environment, learning about the environment and learning for the environment.

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# EDUCATIONAL ACTIVITIES

## INTRODUCTION

Rapid Creek and Darwin lie within the traditional tribal boundaries of the Larrakia people. *Gurambai* is the Larrakia name for the creek. *Gurambai* means 'elbow' and may refer to the shape of the creek towards its mouth.

Rapid Creek is the last relatively natural freshwater creek system in the Darwin town area. It has a total catchment capacity of approximately 1000 hectares. The creek also has a saltwater characteristic incorporating an interesting mangrove community near the mouth. It contains eight different plant communities exemplifying the creek's rich and diverse nature. These plant communities are:

- 1) Coastal community
- 2) Mangrove community
- 3) Monsoon forest
- 4) Transition community
- 5) Eucalypt woodlands
- 6) Pandanus forests
- 7) Grasslands
- 8) Paperbark swamps

Rapid Creek has been and remains an important area to the local Larrakia people. It contains at least one known sacred site (*Gurambai*) and the site of a large Catholic Jesuit Mission which was in operation just before the turn of the century.

Another Larrakia sacred site, *Dariba Nunggalinya* (Old Man Rock), lies to the north west of the mouth of Rapid Creek. *Dariba Nunggalinya* protects the Larrakia people and Darwin itself. If disturbed, the old man is capable of causing earth tremors and devastating storms. Local Aboriginal people claim Cyclone Tracy in 1974 was by such a disturbance.

Rapid Creek is also renowned for its recreational use by the local community. During the war years (1940's) and up to the present day it had been enjoyed by young and old for picnics, camping, fishing and swimming.

Being such an excellent example of urban bushland, given its Aboriginal and historical significance and its importance to the local community, Rapid Creek is an appropriate focus around which to develop educational activities for use in Darwin schools.

The Rapid Creek (*Gurambai*) Education Project was developed in response to a specific need for resource based on the local environment suitable for school use. Greening Australia has consulted extensively with lecturers at the Northern Territory University, teachers, local Darwin residents, elders of the Larrakia community, ecologists and other interested people, organisations and community groups in developing the educational activities and associated resource base.

In addition to this educational activity booklet the project also contains an information booklet which profiles the history, vegetation and management issues of the Rapid Creek freshwater/saltwater system.

## **Aims:**

The Rapid Creek (*Gurumbai*) Education Project aims to provide teachers with ideas for on-site and classroom activities which utilise the local natural environment of the Rapid Creek freshwater/saltwater system. They are designed to be open-ended, not prescriptive. Teachers may follow the options provided or adapt according to their student, timetabling and curriculum needs.

Here is a teaching resource which provides springboards and directions for using Rapid Creek as a focus for educational activities. With some of the options and resources presented teachers will be able to follow up with further studies in the classroom or on-site. Teachers may wish to consult with the relevant people on the contact lists (Resource Base) to explore the range of possibilities

Teachers are also encouraged to go beyond the creek itself and visit a wide range of plant communities on Rapid Creek so that students may appreciate the rich, complex nature of this ecosystem.

The learning activities in this package are most appropriate for the subject areas of **English** and **Social Education**. They target the Year 8-10 student level except where it is specified otherwise. Some of the activities have the potential to be explored further in other subject areas (eg art, geography, the sciences).

## **Description of Learning Activities**

The learning activities of the respective subjects are laid out under the following headings:

**Activity** (activities which focus on Rapid Creek)

**Resources** - site, material and people

**Related Activities** (things which need to be carried out before or in conjunction with the activity)

All activities can be directed towards attaining the learning outcomes of the English and Social Education curricula. It should be noted that information and studies carried out by students on Rapid Creek may be entered onto computer. There is a specific program that can be used to accommodate such data (NT Animals Information System). See Resource Base (contact list) for further guidance.

The Rapid Creek (*Gurumbai*) Education Project contains learning activities suitable for:

### **ENGLISH/LANGUAGE**

1. Creating an Oral History

2. Bush Tucker/Storytelling

### **SOCIAL EDUCATION**

1. Plant Identification  
Walk

2. Plant Community  
Comparative Study

## **ENGLISH/LANGUAGE**

3. Plant Identification Walk
4. Contrasting Literary/Story Forms
5. Creek Creatures
6. Creation of Monthly Magazine
7. Media Activities
8. Theatre/Storytelling
9. Human Impact Studies
10. Role Play/Public Hearing
11. Educational Activities Booklet
12. Nature/Bird Diary

## **SOCIAL EDUCATION**

3. Mangrove Identification Walk
4. Mangrove Case Study
5. Mangrove Bush Tucker
6. Mangrove Leaf Litter Trap
7. Creekwatch
8. Revegetation
9. Human Impact Studies
10. Rapid Creek Mission Case Study
11. Larrakia Case Study
12. Now and Then Study
13. Bird Watching

## **RESOURCE BASE**

All items listed in the Resource Base are held at Greening Australia's Darwin office. The resources listed in the educational activities under the headings: **site**, **material** and **people** are contained and fully detailed in the **Resource Base** found towards the rear of this booklet (page 35). The **Resource Base** contains information about:

1) **Sites** on Rapid Creek which students can visit for various educational activities (this also contains a map showing the location of sites). There are two maps outlining the various **activity** and **historical sites** along the creek which can be used for education purposes.

The Water Gardens near Trower Road can be used as a good starting and finishing point. It is a pleasant site for teachers and students to relax, have refreshments, share and review their experiences and observations.

It could also be a good idea for teachers to combine an environmental activity with lunch at the Water Gardens. In so doing it can be a pleasant, recreational day out for students while, at the same time, having an educational focus.

- 2) **Resource Materials** which can be used in relation to the educational programmes and
- 3) **People** with relevant expertise who may be contacted for assistance with the activities.

## **WALKING LIGHTLY ALONG RAPID CREEK**

**To ensure the preservation of the quality of the Rapid Creek freshwater/saltwater system please:**

Ensure your walking has minimal impact on the environment. Don't stomp on plants!

Carry out any rubbish you may have.

Do not walk on badly eroded creek banks.

Keep vehicles out of fenced areas and do not drive vehicles right up to the creek bank.

Do not remove bark, leaves, branches, seeds, fruit, plants or any part of a plant from the environment unless authorised by activity leader.

Leave dogs at home, or keep them on a leash.

Carry a sunscreen, hat and sufficient water.

It is better to avoid the Top End heat so, early morning and late afternoon are the best times to visit Rapid Creek.

Crocodiles have been known to travel up as far as the Kimmorley bridge, McMillans Road, Marrara. People, therefore, should not swim in the creek between the mouth and Kimmorley bridge.