

North Central chat

JULY 2017

A message from the Regional Landcare Coordinator

Hi everyone,

June has been an extremely busy month, as always leading up to the EOFY.

Community Grants have certainly been the focus for me over the past four weeks, providing guidance and support to applicants. I watched eagerly as draft project applications rose from 14 on June 16 to 36 at 5pm on Friday June 23. The grants will be assessed by a panel over the coming two weeks and decisions will be made on successful applications in mid-July. The total pool of funding to be allocated for the 2017-18 Community Grants program is \$340,000.

On June 14, I attended the Landcare Victoria Inc. (LVI) Landcare Professionals' Conference in Riddles Creek. The conference enabled paid Landcare support staff such as local facilitators and Landcare network coordinators to network and access peer supported learning in conjunction with the new peak body for landcare support in Victoria. LVI, as a new organisation, will be hosting a 2017 forum in the North Central CMA region and are seeking input from grassroots landcare groups within our catchment to steer the agenda and location, which is yet to be confirmed. Please get in touch with me if you are interested in being part of the discussion and shaping this conference.

In late May, Darren and I met with local Landcare Facilitators in Clunes for our regular quarterly meeting which was short and sharp to allow us to head into the Moolort Wetlands. Led by Upper Loddon and Avoca Landcare Network Facilitator Chris Pollock, it was quite fresh to say the least, but the group enjoyed the wetlands which were just gorgeous, surrounded by remnant woodland and a must see when in their wetter phase.

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Chicks in the Sticks is planned for September 2017 in the gorgeous Avon Plains at Walkers Lake. More details and date confirmation will be available soon, so keep an eye out for that.

Looking ahead, we're in celebration mode as July marks the 20th anniversary of Victorian CMAs. Festivities continue when NAIDOC kicks off on July 3 and National Tree Day events are held across the country on July 30. *Best wishes to everyone involved in these upcoming events.*

Enjoy the read,

Tess Grieses

Regional Landcare Coordinator

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News...

Funding for the critically endangered Plains-wanderer

Ensuring suitable habitat for the critically endangered Plains-wanderer (*Pedionomus torquatus*) is the focus of a \$300,000 funding boost from the Victorian Government's Biodiversity On-Ground Action initiative.

Parks Victoria and DELWP recently announced the funding boost. PV Regional Area of Work Coordinator, Bruce Wehner said "Parks Victoria will work with Trust for Nature, Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning and adjoining private landholders to undertake a range of work in the Northern Plains Grasslands, including Terrick Terrick National Park."

Jill Fleming, DELWP Program Manager Biodiversity, says the funding is from the Biodiversity On-Ground Action initiative, which aims to address major risks to threatened species and ecosystems in priority areas. "This project is a great collaboration between many partners who have worked more than ten years to create suitable habitat for Plains-wanderers across public and private land" Jill said.

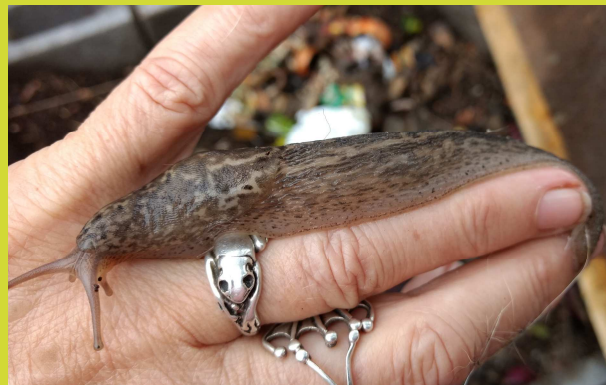
On-ground works will include strategic weed control, rabbit control, close monitoring of grassland habitat, active management of grazing to maintain habitat, fauna monitoring and fencing.

A total of \$7.7M worth of project funding was allocated through the Regional Biodiversity On-Ground Action initiative. The full list of projects can be found online at: www.environment.vic.gov.au/biodiversity/biodiversity-on-groundaction



Winter Wonders

This month we feature some of the images sent in from readers across the catchment...



This huge slug was enjoying the compost heap hiding from the chilly Creswick conditions! (Photo: J Marriott)



Little lambcarers in action on a farm in Serpentine



Changed road conditions ahead! (Photo A. Rogers)



Invitation to Participate in the Recent Ecological Change in Australia Project

The CSIRO and the Department of the Environment and Energy are undertaking a study to help us understand how Australia's biodiversity has been changing in recent years, and whether the 1°C increase in surface temperature experienced over the past century may have contributed to these changes. This will provide a unique and important historical record for Australia.

To do this CSIRO are seeking observations and anecdotes about recent ecological change through a national online survey, taking about 30 minutes to complete. To participate, you would need to select a natural area (e.g. your local region or farm, a Nature Reserve, urban bushland) that you have been familiar with for at least the past 10 years. Note that the team are interested in areas where change has been observed and where changes have not been observed.

The online survey can be completed before August 31. Visit:

<https://research.csiro.au/biodiversity-knowledge/projects/recent-history-climate-driven-ecological-change-australia/reca-survey/>

Celebrating success in style using StoryMap

The success of the Kyneton Woodlands project (2012-17) was celebrated recently with landholders, partnering Landcare groups and Macedon Ranges Shire Council.

The celebration event launched an interactive web-based tool to tell the project story of protecting threatened grassy woodlands with funding support from the Australian Government.

To journey through the achievements of the Kyneton Woodlands Project, visit our interactive StoryMap [at http://bit.ly/kynetonwoodlands](http://bit.ly/kynetonwoodlands)



Hello everyone,

Welcome to another edition of the North Central Chat, I hope you have been enjoying all the wonderful news and stories from the Landcare team!

In this edition we highlight the adventures from Baringhup Primary School and their journey along 30 km of the Loddon River. We interview Anna Parker, Project Manager here at the CMA to find out about the winter base flows for Gunbower Creek and we ask her how to get involved. There is also a feature on a beautiful short film of a Platypus sighted in the Campaspe River taken by a local.

We have lots of events planned for the next few months. In July, I will be attending the Waterwatch Coordinators meeting, Sophie and I will also be attending the Victorian Citizen Science meeting to find out all the news and how we can get more involved.

In August, I'll be heading out to catch up with volunteers for our Annual Quality Assurance and Quality Control events, it would be great to see all our wonderful volunteers at these events so we can test your skills and equipment and ensure we are collecting reliable data that can confidently be used to help make informed decisions about waterway management. Also coming up in August for our River Detective teachers is the second round of workshops; we will focus on Waterbugs as the theme and introduce sampling, exploring, sorting, identifying techniques and how to record your data.

Keep your eyes peeled for upcoming events, and I look forward to catching up with you soon,

Cass Davis

Regional Waterwatch Coordinator
North Central Catchment Management Authority
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DANGER! The use of opera house nets for yabbing is illegal in public waterways in Victoria, people caught using them could face a \$37,000 fine or up to two years in jail.

Coliban Water Poster Competition is on again!

Coliban Water is inviting students in the Coliban Water region to participate in the upcoming National Water Week Primary Schools Poster Competition during National Water Week.

Students are invited to create an A3 poster reflecting water-related issues that are important and relevant to them. The 2017 National Water Week theme is 'Water, the Heart of our Culture'.

Students can use paint, pencils, photos, felt pens, collage materials or computer graphics.



Entries are invited in four categories:

- Prep / Foundation
- Grade 1 & 2
- Grade 3 & 4
- Grade 5 & 6

To register your interest, please nominate one contact for your school and email Rebecca Hermans at rebecca.hermans@coliban.com.au or call 4408 5461.

Baringhup Primary school investigate salinity in the Loddon River

By Cathy McCallum

We had a great time doing the Saltwatch week activities. We travelled on the Maldon Baringhup community bus to visit sites and test the salt from Newstead to Three Bridges at Eddington, travelling over 30 km of the Loddon River!

The children, Bernadette and I entered the data on the Waterwatch /Saltwatch site on the following day. Most of the readings for Loddon were good, around 300us/cm.

Students worked in groups on their worksheet which was designed to have the students observe the immediate environment and reflect on how the local Traditional Owners, the Dja Dja Wurrung people lived and worked along the Loddon River. Recording the results at four stops was taken very seriously by the students. We took three meters with us to ensure accurate results.

The winning team chose books on animals, frogs and paper planes which I was able to get at a second hand bookshop in Castlemaine.



River Detectives from Baringhup Primary School testing salt levels in the Loddon River

Playtupus on show!

We recently received this wonderful video clip from local Meg Doller who was lucky enough to capture one of Australia's most loved aquatic creatures, the platypus. To see the clip go to: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KwRzIKENmfl&feature=youtu.be>

There are no limits to what we can do these days with technology and capturing moments like these are opportunities not to be missed. So next time your down by the river, have your phone ready for that special moment!



Meg shared the following footage which was taken from the same location 11 months ago, WOW!

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ABlQhHUHG-8>

Meg also shared more footage that was captured by friends canoeing near Avonmore Bridge:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=b6MTQGC428Q>

If you would like to share your videos and photos with us, please do, we would love to share your story!

What's it all about... Winter base flows in Gunbower Creek.

Anna Parker, Gunbower Forest Project Manager

What does the close of irrigation season mean for fish?

The close of irrigation season basically means that there will be no water diverted through the Gunbower Creek system for irrigation purposes. This is the time that Goulburn Murray Water often lower the water levels in Gunbower Creek and the channel network so that they can undertake maintenance works on regulators, channels etc.

If there is no water going down Gunbower Creek, it would drain down to a series of disconnected pools. This would force all the fish into smaller areas (pools), increasing the rate of predation and reduces the amount of food and shelter available for them.

This puts a lot of pressure on the fish, especially for the younger fish which means many of the younger fish will die over the the winter period. So we will deliver environmental water over the winter period to ensure fish have enough diversity of habitats to survive the winter.

What can our River Detectives do to help your project?

River Detectives can keep their eyes on the depth of the creek and monitor how it changes over the winter period. Some areas of the creek will drop a lot, where other areas won't change much at all. Water quality monitoring such as dissolved oxygen, turbidity and temperature measures over the winter period would help us too.

Why is environmental water over the winter so important for the creek?

Environmental water during the winter will help prevent the creek draining back to disconnected

pools. This ensures that fish in the creek have enough food and habitat to survive the winter period. The winter flow also helps keep water quality good during this time.

How could the data our River Detectives collect help your project?

Data collected by River Detectives would help us monitor the creek to make sure we have enough environmental water delivered during the winter. It would also help increase our understanding on how the water quality in the creek changes in response to our environmental water.

Thanks Anna, we hope to see our River Detectives out and about over the winter period testing the water quality, taking photos and uploading your data to the River Detectives website.



River Detective nets- How you can make your own!

Tracey Hardbridge, Catchment Restoration Officer

A project proposal was submitted to the western drought crew to make sample macroinvertebrate net that school groups could utilise while collecting waterbug samples for their River Detectives program.

The materials were supplied by the drought employment program, for the first five sample nets. Karen Goldsmith a community liaison officer for the drought employment program started the process by sewing the nets together, using a mini weave of very fine fiberglass mesh similar to flyscreen, although much stronger.

Karen completed 6 nets out of a 2.05m roll and all within a day. The nets were then passed on to Dale Fraser and Brett Hawting for final construction. Dale and Brett use a pine cedar dowel 1m in length for the handle and fencing wire instead of coat hangers. The process from start to finish was very cost effective and construction was straight forward. Everyone was so engrossed in creating the nets that we forgot to get a photo on the day!

For more detail contact, please contact Cass.



Sustainable Ag Snippet...

Timor West Landcare in Central Victoria - Working together for our soils

As told by Dianne Mullins and Ken Calder (Timor West Landcare) to Phil Dyson, North Central CMA's Farming for Sustainable Soils Program Manager.

The Timor West group is working together to encourage local farming families to take responsibility for the health of their soils. The Timor West Landcare area straddles the catchment of the Bet Bet Creek west of Maryborough in north central Victoria.

Three years ago Dianne and Dan Mullins from Dunluce west of Maryborough decided they needed to do something about land degradation on their property within the granite country below the Black Ranges. After experiencing the work of the Northern United Forestry on saltland at Kamarooka, and discussions with Ken Wellard of Neagar Nursery they became participants in Project RENEW. RENEW was a newly formed consortium comprising the North Central CMA, The City of Greater Bendigo, La Trobe University, and the Northern United Forestry Group. With financial support from the Helen Macpherson Smith Trust RENEW had a focus on building community wellbeing through soil-landscape repair and regeneration.

Dianne and Dan began working with Ken Calder lessee of the Dunluce property. They set about finding a solution to a very difficult soil problem. The upper half metre of the granite soils is entirely composed of bleached fine grained sand that sets rock hard in the summer and turns to slush in the winter. Given the prevalence of these granitic soils throughout the area it was not long before the Timor West Landcare group became involved.

In 2016 the Timor West Landcare group joined the North Central CMA's Farming for Sustainable Soils Program (FSS). Dianne Mullins, Secretary of the group says, "With financial support from the National Landcare Programme and the North Central CMA we now have the resources for our farming families to participate in a community-based soils program.

Ken Calder, now Chair of Timor West Landcare says the program challenges the thinking of local farmers making them question whether there is a better way to manage soils for long-term sustainability than their current practices. "The great thing about the FSS program is the

guidance, support and resources it affords to people who participate. Farmers and others from our community have the opportunity to increase their knowledge of the health and condition of our soils, to better understand the challenges in managing difficult soils, and to learn from some of the best experts in the country.

"Our group has made a commitment to a three-year soil program. At the outset we discussed the opportunity and how we could build the program to suit local needs and soil conditions. We are the 13th FSS group the CMA has established since 2009.

"We kicked off our FSS program by gathering information from local farmers which led to the development of a three-year Local Area Soil Plan." Ken said at the first workshop farming families shared their current farm management practices, the influence of markets and climate, and the impact they believe all of this has on their soils. "Each participant also spoke about their own situation, why they farm the way they do, the things that work well in terms of sustaining the health of their soils, and the challenges they face.

Dianne says the appointment of a part-time FSS facilitator is paramount to the group's ongoing success. "Merron Ipsen is from a local farming family and a recent graduate in agricultural science from Melbourne University. Her job is to bring us together to plan each of the annual activities contributing to the delivery of our FSS plan." Dianne says Merron works with the Landcare Executive, helping to organise meetings, social events and field days. We also conduct trials and demonstrations that allow our farmers to test, in the field, the legitimacy of potential regenerative farming practices," concluded Dianne



Field day participants inspect a break of slope plantation recently established by Timor West Landcare to intercept groundwater in granitic terrain before it has the opportunity to contribute to salinity in the lower catchment.



Soil Health workshops continue across the catchment

Darren Bain- Regional Landcare Facilitator

Soil is one of our most important assets and should be given a high priority with decisions made on your property. It supports billions of microbes, which help maintain a healthy living soil.

Raising awareness and providing skills and knowledge of soil health is one area the North Central CMA is committed to help farmers understand. The Soil Health Guide has been an important tool in achieving this. The guide was developed with funding from the National Landcare Programme through the Regional Landcare Facilitator role. The guide has been utilised with several groups of farmers over the past few months to help them understand their soils using easy tests such as soil pH and soil texture to enhance their skills and knowledge and transfer these to their own property.

The North Central CMA in partnership with Agriculture Victoria delivers soil health workshops throughout the region. At each workshop participants are provided with all the relevant materials to conduct their tests and also a copy of the Soil Health Guide, which they can take home. The only requirement by participants is to bring along a small soil sample.

The next workshop is being hosted by the McCullum's Creek Landcare Group at Talbot, which was organised by Chris Pollock, Upper Loddon Avoca Landcare Network Facilitator. If you would like to know more about the Soil Health Guide contact Darren Bain on (03) 5440 7124 or darren.bain@nccma.vic.gov.au

Events...



Upper Loddon & Avoca
Landcare Network

Integrated weed management, herbicide resistance and much more

The Timor West and Smeaton Farming for Sustainable Soils Groups are hosting an evening focussing on integrated weed management, herbicide resistance, weed ecology and crop-weed interactions in agricultural systems on

Tuesday July 4 at the Maryborough Highland Society.

Participants will hear from Dr Chris Preston, Associate Professor of weed management at the University of Adelaide, who works on understanding and management of herbicide resistant weeds and co directs the Weed Science Research Group (Agricultural Systems).



The evening begins with food orders at 6.00pm and seating and presentation at 6.30pm.

A menu of a main course plus an entrée or dessert at a cost of \$22 per head is available, tea and coffee provided, drinks at bar prices.

When: Tuesday July 4

Where: Maryborough Highland Society. 35 High Street, Maryborough.

Cost: \$22 per head

RSVP: To Facilitators Chris Pollock 5463 2563, (mob) 0421 372 545, email chrisspollock7@gmail.com or Merron Ipsen (mob) 0488 666 249.

BCG Future Farmers Expo

Farmers, agronomists and agribusiness personnel will have the opportunity to hear from specialist presenters at the BCG Future Farmers Expo on July 5 at the Birchip P-12 School.

The event, which will be held from 11am to 5pm and conclude with a post-Expo social tapas dinner at the Birchip Hotel, will provide the opportunity for attendees to hear the latest in climate, success planning, machinery economics, in-season technical agronomy and the practical use of gathering real time data from on-board header protein machines and weather station networks.

When: Wednesday July 5, 11:00 am - 5:00 pm



Where: Birchip P-12 School, 43-47 Campbell Street, Birchip, VIC 3533

Cost: The event is free for BCG members and \$50 for non-members

RSVP: To RSVP for the dinner please visit the BCG website or phone the office on 03 5492 2787.

Vic No-Till Farmers Association 15th Annual Conference 2017

The conference theme for 2017 is Regeneration Nation; healthy soils, people and profits.

International speakers include Paul Jasa (USA), Dr. Christine Jones (NZ) and Blake Vince (CAN). The 1.5 day event on Friday 14th July includes a panel discussion Q&A with the complete line up of conference speakers.

After a massive educational day and an evening of robust discussion, the opportunity will follow to ask all speakers questions about newly acquired knowledge will complete the Vic No-Till Conference.

When: July 13 2017

Where: Rich River Golf Club Resort

Cost: Members \$300+gst
Non-Members \$600+gst

RSVP: Call: 03 5382 0422 or Book Tickets here: <https://www.trybooking.com/273373>

Campaspe River upcoming events

Save the Dates:

Campaspe Carp Catch on National Gone Fishing Day,

Sunday 15 October from 12noon – 3pm at six locations supported by local groups including Kyneton (Kyneton Angling Club), Axedale (Longlea & District Landcare), Elmore (Dja Dja Wurrung), Rochester (Rochester Angling Club), Strathallan (Strathallan Family Landcare) and Echuca (Echuca Moama Landcare). This is a joint event of the Caring for the Campaspe project and North Central Waterwatch with additional funding from VRFish.

Father's Day tree planting

Sunday 3 September along Campaspe Drive, Kyneton. This is a joint event of the Caring for the Campaspe project and Campaspe River & Land Management Working Group.

Contact CMA Project Manager Angela Gladman, on (03) 5448 7124 or email

angela.gladman@nccma.vic.gov.au

National Tree Day events

Across the country, National Tree Day is celebrated on July 30.

Longlea & District Landcare Group together with Friends of the Bendigo Kilmore Rail Trail and the Junortoun Community Action Group are hosting a National Tree Day activity on Sunday 30 July from 10:00am to 12:00pm.

The site is a section of the O'Keefe Rail Trail accessed from LaValla Court in the new Lorient Park estate at Junortoun (opposite Rodilesa Nursery). The event is strongly supported by the City of Greater Bendigo who are providing up to 1,500 trees, shrubs and grasses for the community to plant. Local schools will also take part in the lead up to National Tree Day, including Axedale and Eppalock PS.

Through planting a variety of native plants alongside the rail trail, the event aims to increase biodiversity values that can also provide a habitat corridor for birds, mammals and reptiles.

To register for the event, go to <http://treeday.planetark.org/>

Please bring gloves, a planting tool, warm clothing and sturdy footwear. A free BBQ lunch will be provided at 12 noon.

Funding opportunities...

20 Million Trees Round 3: NOW OPEN

Round Three of the Australian Government's 20 Million Trees was launched yesterday. This is the final round of the 20 Million Trees Competitive Grants.

Six million dollars is available for grants between **\$20,000** and **\$100,000** for tree planting projects that will support EPBC listed Threatened Ecological Communities and Threatened Species.

Individuals and groups can apply for projects on both public and private land.

Guidelines, application form and other useful information is available at:

<http://www.nrm.gov.au/national/20-million-trees/competitive-grants-round-three>

Applications are due on **Tuesday 15 August 2017.**

