

ground cover



NORTH CENTRAL
Catchment Management Authority
Connecting Rivers, Landscapes, People

www.nccma.vic.gov.au

Keeping you up-to-date with all the Landcare news

August 2011

A message from the Regional Landcare Coordinator

Hi everyone,

Happy belated National Tree Day! Plenty of planting day's occurred throughout the catchment on Sunday 31 July, and the positive feedback is that they drew good crowds. It was a marvellous day to be outside and to get your hands dirty, it felt more like spring – and not the middle of winter. I lent a hand at the combined planting day between Sutton Grange Landcare and the Axe Creek Landcare group. Fifty-six people, 12 of which were children, turned out to plant 2,800 plants in a one kilometre long corridor. Look under the 'News' section for an article from the Northern Bendigo Landcare group who also hosted a very successful tree planting day. If you have an event that you would like to advertise, or even to celebrate a post-event, please let me know - we love having articles celebrating the achievements of our groups around the region.

*National Tree Day planters at Sutton Grange.
Photo: Courtesy of Jodie Odgers.*

As we continue to celebrate *25 Years of Landcare* with many planned events and activities, there has been a timely announcement by the State Government regarding funding to celebrate this milestone. The Victorian Government has made available \$600,000 for the **25th Anniversary of Landcare Grants – Looking Back Looking Forward**. The grants will enable Landcare groups and networks across the state to mark this milestone and to look forward to the next 25 years alongside future generations of Landcarers. All ten Victorian Catchment Management Authority's (CMAs) have been allocated a total of \$60,000 for Landcare groups to undertake small projects. Grants will be awarded on a competitive basis where proposals meet the objectives stated in the guidelines. Applicants should focus on addressing local priorities and activities that improve land, water and biodiversity and demonstrate links to the community. The guidelines and application forms will be sent out in the next couple of weeks so stay tuned and near your group's mail box!

In order to get a picture of *25 Years of Landcare* we will be working with groups to collect photographs taken over the past 25 years. These photos will be displayed at an event celebrating this special milestone,

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which will be held later on in the year. So get your photo albums out and dust off those old slides; it will be great to get as many photos from as many different groups as we can! If you have photos in an electronic form please email them to either Ashley or myself, or alternatively scan/photocopy a hardcopy and post them to us!

A quick update about where the 2011-12 Victorian Landcare Grants are at: All of the applications have been assessed and we are now in the process of contacting groups that need to make alterations to their application. Once this process has been completed and the grant allocations endorsed by the Standing Grants Panel all groups will be notified by mail and agreement forms will be posted.

For groups that have outstanding Second Generation Landcare Grant Final Reports please ensure that they are completed and returned as soon as possible. We are currently chasing these, as we are required to finalise the program with the Department of Sustainability and Environment (DSE). To avoid the pending phone call - please get your reports in!

We are approaching a very exciting time in Landcare's 25 year history. I look forward to celebrating the achievements of our volunteers who devote themselves tirelessly for the benefit of the environment around us. More details about upcoming celebratory events will be in future issues of the *Ground Cover* newsletter.

Warm regards,

Jodie Odgers

Regional Landcare Coordinator

North Central Catchment Management Authority
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Phone: 03 5448 7124
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NEWS

National Tree Day event

A glorious day greeted more than 100 volunteers at the Goldleaf Wetland at Huntly for a National Tree Day event co-hosted by the City of Greater Bendigo (CoGB) and the Northern Bendigo Landcare Group on Sunday 31 July.

Volunteers planted almost 5,000 trees and shrubs at the wetland to revegetate the area, provide enhanced shelter for wildlife and improve biodiversity values. People from all over Bendigo, many of which were young families, enjoyed the sunny conditions. Organisers were very pleased to see so many children actively involved in tree planting and having a lot of fun.

On the day the local Lions Club provided a free BBQ; a mud sculpting children's activity was offered by the Children's Art Network; the Landcare Group presented a display of their projects and future plans; and the CoGB handed out free indigenous plant guides.

This little-known wetland area is managed by the CoGB and we are sure the event helped to lift its profile as a valuable recreational area.



Ned and Sam Howie lending a hand at the National Tree Day event.
Photo: Courtesy of Nicole Howie.

Woodland birds put on a wonderful display

Written by Connecting Country's Project Officer, Bryan McMullan.

Connecting Country's monitoring focus recently shifted from nest boxes to woodland birds; as the winter bird community puts on a wonderful display of recovery following favourable environmental conditions. This focus allows the use of woodland bird diversity and numbers as an indicator of

landscape change, especially as a result of beneficial land management strategies that have been funded and facilitated by Connecting Country.

A total of 50 bird survey sites have been selected across the Mt Alexander Shire region through consultation with landholders, members of the management committee and other environmental agencies/stakeholders. To generate a meaningful dataset that will tell the story of landscape change over time, site categories were developed, such as; reference sites (intact vegetation and geomorphology); restoration sites (where land rehabilitation will occur/has occurred); and sites of conventional use (under grazing &/or cropping regimes). All sites were to receive an 'am' and 'pm' survey to ensure a comprehensive snapshot was achieved for each location/site condition.

Flora and fauna consultants Garry and Brenda Cheers were engaged to perform the bird surveys within a timeframe that suited the sampling plan, and developed in partnership with Deakin University. Recently I had the pleasure of discussing with Garry some of the exciting aspects of observations made during the survey work undertaken. After completing more than 70 surveys Garry reported the following notable observations; large groups of Striated Pardalote's around the Yandoit area; Speckled Warblers observed in the Maldon Historic Reserve (Nuggetty aspect); a significant increase in the numbers and range of Flame Robins and Superb Fairy-wrens; and an early appearance of spring migrants such as the Fan-tailed Cuckoo and Rufous Songlarks.

In general, it appears that the numbers and diversity of small foraging birds are on the increase, and that the appearance this season of certain species in these numbers may be quite unique to the landscape. This presents a wonderful opportunity for community groups and individuals alike to get out there and make some of their own observations, and enjoy the festivity of calls and colours of our regions flourishing birdlife. For further information regarding this or other Connecting Country projects please contact the office on 03 5472 1594 or visit our website www.connectingcountry.org.au.



Flame Robin. Photo: Courtesy of Damian Kelly.

A diamond in the rough

Whilst undertaking a flood assessment on a property on Mt Cameron road near Clunes, North Central Catchment Management Authority (CMA) Catchment Restoration Officer Nick Layne, stumbled across some Growling Grass frogs (*Litoria raniformis*). It was on a plateau above the incised basalt valley where five frogs were found under a sheet of tin at the local Gun Club.

In the spring and summer times the landholder has reported that there are plenty of Growling Grass frogs sitting amongst the Cumbungi in the pond at his house. At a state level, the Growling Grass frog is classified as a threatened species under the *Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act 1988*, and listed as vulnerable in the 1997 *Action Plan for Australian Frogs*. However, according to the landholder, the frogs are 'exceptionally common in the area' - so if you happen to be passing through and hear some frogs calling, there is a good chance that they might just be Growling Grass frogs.



Growling Grass Frog. Photo: Courtesy of Nick Layne.

EVENTS

Come all and sundry to a re-veg morning!

Come along and enjoy the serene grassland and help us plant 160 native plants at the Woodstock Natural Features Reserve on Sunday 21 August from 10.30am. The tree planting activity will help restore the middle-storey to this rare and valuable reserve.

Refreshments will be provided at the end of the planting and this will include real coffee - freshly ground beans that are percolated on site!

The site is approximately 20 minutes west of Kangaroo Flat on the corner of Comers Road and the Bendigo-Maryborough Highway. Please bring along gloves, sturdy boots and any of your favourite planting tools. For more information or to RSVP contact Mark Haubenschild on 0407 813 488 or email mkhaub@gmail.com.

How much fire is enough?

For the second talk of the Education Program 2011 the Connecting Country project is hosting a free information night on Thursday 25 August at Campbell's Creek Community Centre. The management of Box-Ironbark forests through controlled fire will be the topic of conversation.

Fire can be used to reduce fuel hazard, and it can also be used to promote biodiversity. But what is the 'natural' fire regime in Box-Ironbark forests? How much fire can Box-Ironbark forests tolerate and how much burning should or could we be doing there?

Connecting Country project manager Chris Timewell said the night will be an opportunity for the community to hear and discuss the management of Box-Ironbark forests using fire.

Guest speaker, Dr Arn Tolsma, a senior scientist in Community Ecology at the Arthur Rylah Institute, has a particular knowledge of forests and woodlands in our region. In 2007 Dr Tolsma co-authored a research paper for the North Central CMA on fire ecology and management.

"One of the main problems that natural resource managers face is balancing the needs or wishes for a controlled fire regime with the needs of our native plants and animals," Dr Tolsma said this week. "If management burns are too frequent, there is a risk of long term decline in some native species, and deterioration of soil quality. On the other hand, there is also the risk of losing species if burns are not frequent enough."

He concluded that, "We are starting to get a better understanding of the way Aborigines used fire in this region. Most Box-Ironbark species do not need fire to regenerate, but we still need to do more research into how much fire is appropriate."

So how much fire is enough? To find out, turn up to the Campbell's Creek Community Centre on Thursday 25 August. A light supper will be served from 6.30pm, and the talk will go from 7 to 9pm. Bookings can be made by contacting Chris on 03 5472 1594 or chris@connectingcountry.org.au.

This free event is part of Connecting Country's Yellow Box Woodland project. The project is being undertaken in partnership with the North Central CMA and is co-funded by the federal Caring for our Country program and the State Natural Resource Investment Program.





Climate Change Discussion- Woodend

Professor David Karoly, climate scientist and member of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, will be speaking at an event in Woodend on Wednesday 31 August at 7.30pm. Prof Karoly is an expert in climate change science and was involved, through several different roles, in the preparation of the Fourth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) released in 2007. He is actively involved in research on climate variability and climate change; was Chair of the Premier of Victoria's Climate Change Reference Group during 2008-09; and has been a strong supporter of grass roots movements.

If you would like to hear Professor Karoly speak then head to the Woodend Neighbourhood House, 47 Forest St on Wednesday 31 August. This event is free of charge and has been organised by the Macedon Ranges Sustainability Group. For more information please contact 03 5427 1000 or email mrsg@woodendweb.org.

Productive Farming for a Variable Water Future

The North Central CMA invites farmers, landholders and agricultural service providers to attend a free forum on Wednesday 17 August in Kerang to discuss **Productive Farming with a Variable Water Future**. The forum which will run from 9.30am-3.30pm at the Kerang Valley Resort will provide an opportunity to;

- hear from local farmers who have successfully changed their land use,
- hear from key note speakers regarding sustainable land practice options on farming land where irrigation has been significantly reduced, or ceased completely,
- network with farmers and others to share experiences, lessons and advice,
- learn more about the **Innovative Farming program** and associated projects.

The forum is delivered under the North Central CMA's **Adopting Sustainable Farm Practices and Innovative Farming Implementation Plan** projects, and is supported by the Commonwealth Government's *Caring for our Country* initiative and *Strengthening Basin Communities* program.

For catering purposes please RSVP to North Central CMA on 03 5448 7124 or info@nccma.vic.gov.au by **Monday 15 August**.

Free Volunteer Management Workshops in Heathcote, Kyneton, Castlemaine & Maldon

If your community group, not for profit organisation or sporting club relies on volunteers then come along to a free Volunteer Management Workshop and learn how to:

- Strengthen and support your community group.
- Attract and retain new volunteers.
- Develop new recruitment strategies.
- Discover resources to assist with funding, marketing and managing your organisation.

Discover more about Victoria's Volunteer Portal. The Portal is an on-line service, providing a one-stop shop for all your volunteer needs. This workshop will showcase resources available to community groups, provide volunteer management tips and tools and assist you to create online advertisement to attract new volunteers. Free 'hands-on' workshops are being conducted by the Bendigo Volunteer Resource Centre throughout the region thanks to funding from the Department of Planning and Community Development.

Come along to a Volunteer Management Workshop in:

KYNETON

Where: Kyneton Community and Learning Centre,
34 Mollison Street, Kyneton.

When: Wednesday 17 August from 10am - 12 noon.

HEATHCOTE

Where: Mclvor Neighbourhood House,
55 Hospital Street, Heathcote.

When: Wednesday 17 August from 1pm - 3pm.

CASTLEMAINE

Where: Castlemaine Community House, Faulder Watson
Hall, 210 Barker Street, Castlemaine.

When: Thursday 18 August from 10am - 12 noon.

MALDON

Where: Maldon Neighbourhood Centre,
corner of Edwards and Church Streets, Maldon

When: Thursday 18 August from 1pm - 3pm.

For more information or to book your place, contact Jacqueline or the team at the Bendigo Volunteer Resource Centre: Phone: 5441 1404 or email bvrcadmin@ymca.org.au.



Bendigo Creek Community Field Day

Thanks to a Second Generation Landcare Grant the Northern Bendigo Landcare Group launched their long-term commitment to the restoration of the Bendigo Creek between Huntly and Epsom in 2010/11. To celebrate Landcare Week and the value of this often misunderstood waterway, everyone is invited to a field day on Sunday 11 September. The field day starts at 9.30am from Leans Road Huntly. Participants will enjoy a day of talks, walks and hands-on activities designed to raise awareness of the Bendigo Creek and contribute to restoration works.

Short talks will discuss the assets, threats and importance of the Bendigo Creek in the past, present and future; the indigenous heritage, gold rush days, features of healthy riverine environments and the role of a creek that flows from a growing urban centre. Active sessions will include treeplanting, macro-invertebrate sampling and a walk to view and discuss the function of nestboxes. The afternoon will involve a bus tour visiting two significant sites downstream including Terrick Terrick National Park where Parks Victoria and the Northern Plains CMN manage native grasslands, maintain biolinks between the park and the Bendigo Creek, and monitor Plains Wanderer populations. The tour will end where Bendigo Creek does - at the nationally important wetland known as Kow Swamp. It will end with enjoyable talks about the area, its importance for native birds and its role within the catchment.

This is a child-friendly free event, with snacks and lunch provided and a take home bag of resources and information about the topics covered. Bookings are essential. To RSVP for the morning creekside session, the afternoon bus tour, or for both, and to receive more detailed information, please contact Nicole Howie 5448 8244 / dnhowie@bigpond.com by Wednesday 7 September.

Naturally Loddon - A Wonderland in Spring

Loddon River Experience: The North Central CMA is hosting a free event to showcase the beautiful Loddon outdoors. The day will consist of canoe trips, indigenous walks and Waterwatch activities.

When: Saturday 10 September

Time: 10.00am to 3.00pm

Where: Boort-Pyramid Hill road, Durham Ox (near Hall

Cost: Free - with lunch also provided

Bookings are essential. Phone North Central CMA on 03 5448 7124 or email info@nccma.vic.gov.au before 5 September.

There are many family-friendly and nature appreciation activities being held throughout the Loddon region during spring. Visit www.nccma.vic.gov.au to find out more about the tours and exhibitions that will showcase the beauty of the Loddon for locals and tourists alike.

COURSES & RESOURCES

Diploma in Conservation and Land Management

Are you employed or wishing to gain employment in the Conservation and Natural Resource sector?

Are you interested in furthering your skills?

Does any of the following apply to you?

- Completed previous NRM studies (or equivalent), or
- Relevant industry skills and experience, or
- Just about to finish your undergraduate degree or
- Not sure, speak to us!

Have you considered a program, in which you work on projects within the industry, get recognised for your prior skills and experience and can complete some of your studies in an off-campus mode?

The Bendigo TAFE Diploma of Conservation and Land Management are developed to prepare students for positions in industry, local government and government departments.

KEY STUDY AREAS:

- Parks and Environment Management.
- Management Planning.
- Restoration Project Management.
- Pest Plant & Animal Management.
- River/Catchment Management.
- Flora & Fauna Assessment.
- Regulatory skills and certificates.

This program provides students with tangible vocational opportunities being aligned to formal qualifications and has given industry the opportunity to work with future graduates. Part time, focussing selected skills sets (e.g. restoration, community engagement, or rivers) can be undertaken instead of the full Diploma if required. **Limited places are available.**

For those new to the industry, we will also be providing information on the Certificate IV CLM program (delivered as first year of the diploma) as well.

OPEN DAY

Date: Sunday 28 August.

Time: 10.00am - 2.00pm

Location: H Building Charleston Road Campus.

INFORMATION SESSION

Date: Thursday 27 October 2011.

Time: 5.30pm

Location: Arrival Centre, Charleston Road Campus.

For more information phone 03 5434 1601 or refer to the Bendigo TAFE website (www.bendigotafe.edu.au) for maps.



Invitation to a Short Course in Grass ID and Management

Expressions of Interest are now being accepted for the short course in **Grass identification and Management**. The two-day course will cover:

- Native and introduced grass species identification.
- Grass indicator species for ecological health and conservation values of grassy areas.
- Grass management for conservation and agriculture.

The course will be presented by ecologist Dr Graeme Lorimer and will involve a mixture of lectures and hands-on experience in the laboratory, as well as a field trip to the Kinypanial Grassland Reserve, south-west of Terrick Terrick.

Sponsorship is available for Landcare members and farmers in the North Central CMA region. For all other participants the course cost is \$250 per person. *Places are strictly limited.* To request a copy of the Expression of Interest Form please contact the North Central CMA reception on (03) 5448 7124 or ashley.beven@nccma.vic.gov.au.

When: Friday 18 and Saturday 19 November 2011.

Time: 9.30am to 5.00pm (lunch provided).

Where: Bendigo Regional Institute of TAFE (BRIT),
Charleston Road Campus, Bendigo.

Expression of Interest should be submitted to the North Central CMA by 5pm Monday 17 October. It can be submitted by mail to Ashley Beven, North Central CMA, PO Box 18, Huntly 3550 or via email to ashley.beven@nccma.vic.gov.au.

The 2011 Grassland Management Conference

The Wyndham City Council are hosting the 2011 Grassland Management Conference on 10 and 11 November at the Wyndham Civic Centre in Werribee. The event aims to improve grassy ecosystems by creating an informed and coordinated approach to management. The conference will bring together a range of experts, project managers and representatives from agencies and organisations that have a focus on grassland management and conservation. This event will provide an opportunity for those managing biodiversity in the plains to share research and techniques, create networks and to enhance their grassland management knowledge. Registrations are now open, cost is \$176. Early Bird rates of \$143 are available until 16 August. For further information and to book your space please contact Liz Drury on (03) 9742 0777 or liz.drury@wyndham.vic.gov.au by 20 August 2011.

To register for this event visit: www.wyndham.vic.gov.au/environment/environmentsustainability/eventsprograms/events/grasslandsconference.

FUNDING NEWS

City of Greater Bendigo's Community Grants are now open!

Applications are open from 1 August until 9 September 2011 for the 2011-2012 City of Greater Bendigo Community Grants Program. Project applications up to \$5,000 can be submitted for project applications in the following grant categories; Cultural, Community Events, Community Assistance, Recreation and Environmental Sustainability.

The Community Grants Program is open to community organisations, service clubs and associations. The program will provide grant funding for projects, events, exhibitions/performances which contribute to a vibrant community and this is the only round to be offered for 2011-2012.

The Community and Cultural Development Unit of the City of Greater Bendigo encourages community organisations, service clubs and associations that would like to access funding from the program to start working on their applications so that they don't miss out on the 9 September closing deadline.

All community organisations, service clubs and associations interested in applying for a grant should read the criteria carefully to determine the appropriate grant category for their organisation.

Further information can be obtained from the City of Greater Bendigo by phoning 03 5434 6463 or by emailing c.wright@bendigo.vic.gov.au. Application forms are available either online (www.bendigo.vic.gov.au/Residents_and_Services/Grants) or in hard copy from the City of Greater Bendigo's Customer Service Centre's at Lyttleton Terrace or in Heathcote.

Bendigo Bank Community Grants

The Bendigo Bank Community Enterprise Foundation is offering community grants to local organisations in the Inglewood and Heathcote regions. Any charitable and not-for-profit organisation can apply for projects and activities that offer clear public benefit for communities contributing to the development of building social capital, community welfare, environmental, health, education or cultural areas. You will need to be quick as grants close on Thursday 18 August for the Inglewood region and Wednesday 31 August for Heathcote.

For more information go to: http://www.bendigobank.com.au/public/foundation/grants/grants_and_guidelines.asp or call 1300 304 541 and select option 2 when prompted.



Keeping you up-to-date with all the Landcare news

BE NATURAL Landcare Grant Round 2011

BE NATURAL cereals and snack producers are supporters of Landcare and are keen to tackle local environmental issues. They have opened a community grants program which is currently offering funding of up to \$5,000 to 25 groups to continue work on an ongoing project. For groups to be eligible for this grant round then they will not have received funding for the project in question in the past 12 months; and are encouraged to find innovative ways of attracting volunteers to their group or project. The BE NATURAL Landcare grant round is open until the 10 of October, and all information, criteria and application forms can be found on www.landcareonline.com.au.

Get your 'Ground Cover' direct

The newsletter you are reading is for ALL members of Landcare and Friends groups in our region. If you would like to receive it directly, rather than via your group, jump on our direct email list. All you have to do is send an email request to landcare@nccma.vic.gov.au or phone reception on 03 5448 7124.



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