

Our popular Big Cohuna Festival events

The North Central CMA ran the annual Kids Catch a Carp Fishing Competition as part of the Big Cohuna Festival on 1 November.

This year saw the biggest turnout yet with more than 80 children fishing along Gunbower Creek at the Apex Park.

“After two hours of fishing there were nine carp caught and plenty more reports of the ones that got away,” North Central CMA Project Officer Amy Russell said.

North Central CMA staff also took community members on a bus tour of Gunbower Forest as part of the festival.

“We love showing members of the community where the water is flowing and how it is improving the health of the forest,” North Central CMA Project Officer Kathryn Stanislowski said.

“Unfortunately the afternoon tour was cancelled due to thunderstorms that passed through the area.”



North Central CMA Project Officer Kathryn Stanislowski talks to community members on the tour of Gunbower Forest. Photo: John Childs

Largest fish – Locky Farr (3.2kg carp)



Smallest fish – Josh Trevera (136gm carp)



SAVE THE DATE
March 2016
CARP FORUM
KERANG

As part of the lower Loddon and Gunbower Native Fish Recovery Plan, the North Central Catchment Management Authority is holding a carp forum in Kerang. The forum is scheduled in the **week of 7 March 2016**.

Attendees will hear from experts in the field who will discuss the latest developments in carp management, including the planned release of the carp herpes virus.

Pencil March 2016 in your diary now!

More information coming soon.

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 Catchment Management Authority
Connecting Rivers, Landscapes, People

Representing
 Victorian
 Recreational
 Fishers



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COMMUNITY NEWSLETTER

Edition 11: Spring 2015

Welcome to the 11th edition of the Flooding for Life community newsletter.

A lot has been happening since the last edition, with another water allocation making its way through the forest and a few events taking place in recent weeks. We hope you've had the chance to get out and enjoy what's been on offer.

Forest flourishing in response to spring watering

Gunbower Forest is flourishing in response to this year's spring environmental watering event.

The majority of the water has been delivered through the Hipwell Road channel, with smaller volumes also delivered through the lower landscape regulators.

A total of 28.5 GL was delivered into the forest over 75 days.

This year's watering of the forest was an important follow-up to consolidate some of the benefits we observed last year.

“The small bodied fish that were in the wetlands have again bred up with thousands of native Australian smelt and carp gudgeon again being found to be moving through the fishlock at Hipwell Road,” Gunbower Forest Project Manager Anna Parker said.



Water in Little Reedy Wetland Complex, October 2015

“Seeing these small bodied fish doing so well in response to the watering events indicates the forest is doing well, providing

the habitat and food for these fish”.

“The creeks and floodrunners in the upper part of the forest received a good flush and water levels in the high-priority permanent and semi-permanent wetlands in the middle and lower sections have been topped up.”

This year's watering has inundated about 3500 hectares of the forest. The river red gums have once again put on another flush of fresh growth and hundreds of water birds are also reaping the benefits with regular sightings of ducks, cormorants, herons and pelicans.

The water moved slower through the forest this year than anticipated.

“The Black Swamp, Reedy Lagoon and Little Gunbower regulators were all opened in early October to ensure the lower wetlands got the water they need,” Anna said.

“It has been particularly important to ensure we use the allocation we had available this year as it looks like northern Victoria is moving into a drier period.”



Spring 2015 Environmental flow at Corduroy Track

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Healthy Parks
 Healthy People

Top prize at awards

The North Central CMA had a great night at the recent River Basin Management Society (RBMS) awards ceremony in Melbourne. The Living Murray Hipwell Road Channel Package of Works project won first place for the Outstanding Waterway Management Project category.

The criteria judged for this award included:

1. Project objectives and outputs strongly align with the strategic direction of the industry and key stakeholders
2. Best practice in project management has been implemented, including planning, delivery and monitoring and evaluation; health and safety; timeframes; and budgets
3. Sustainable environmental, social and economic outcomes have been achieved.

The North Central CMA was also a finalist for the Involving Community in Waterway Management category for its Caring for the Campaspe project.



Kira Woods, Kathryn Stanaslawski, Anna Parker, Brad Drust and Ross Stanton (GMW)

Talgukk larrh

Aboriginal clapsticks provided traditional music on the rain-soaked banks of the Gunbower Creek on Thursday 5 November for a cultural workshop.

With partners the Kerang Local Aboriginal Network and the North Central CMA's Barapa Water for Country project, Barapa people led 'Talgukk larrh' (meaning good camp) to showcase some of the cultural skills of their ancestors, still practiced today.

"Elder Uncle Ron Galway welcomed 20 people onto Barapa Country, followed by a cultural walk highlighting the food, fiber and medicinal plants of the local area such as Water Pepper and Water Ribbons," North Central CMA Project Officer Robyn McKay said.

Participants sewed and decorated possum skins (from New Zealand) into a traditional cloak, and transformed red gum timber into clapsticks.



Minda Murray and Debbie Webster sewing the possum skins together



Check out Gunbower Forest on Google Earth! The aerial image was taken recently and shows just how much of the forest received environmental water this year.

Gunbower Creek gets a carbon boost

An important component of the 2015 environmental watering program in Gunbower Forest and Creek was to provide a boost to carbon levels of Gunbower Creek.

Carbon is the base of the food chain in natural systems and in an aquatic environment it is in a dissolved form – known as dissolved organic carbon.

"Gunbower Creek and the Murray River need regular inputs of carbon to ensure they can continue to sustain plants and animals, such as Murray cod, turtles, yabbies and platypus," Project Manager Anna Parker said.

"The main source of carbon for Gunbower Creek is Gunbower Forest."

How does the forest produce carbon? When the plants and leaf litter on the forest floor are flooded they release carbon, nutrients and tannins into the water. The tannins darken the water, which is where we get the term blackwater from.

It is important some of the nutrient and carbon-rich blackwater is released into the Gunbower Creek and into the Murray River to ensure they remain healthy.

In late October the Yarran Creek regulator (located on Rifle Butts Track) was opened to allow some of the carbon-rich water to flow into Gunbower Creek.

"This was the first time we had operated the Yarran Creek regulator in this way," Anna said.

"We kept an eye on water quality in Gunbower Creek to ensure the blackwater didn't have any negative impacts on the fish and other critters that live in the water."

Releasing the blackwater into the creek at this time of year will help Murray cod larvae survive by providing the boost to the food chain.



Blackwater entering Gunbower Creek via Yarran Creek regulator.

FIVE MINUTES WITH GLENN HALL

We recently had a chat with Glenn and asked him why he joined the Gunbower Island CRG and what he loves about the forest.

I came to Cohuna in 1991 as Principal of the secondary college. One of the reasons I applied for the town was the impression it left on us a few years earlier when we stopped here on the Great Victorian Bike Ride. Before Cohuna we were living in Stawell and the Grampians and ironbark forests were our escapes to the bush. It took along while to see the beauty in the Gunbower Forest as it was so different to the mountains we were used to. But appreciation did come.

After retiring from teaching, I did some contract work for the North Central CMA and that certainly got me interested in the organisation and the work they were doing. At the same time the North Central CMA invited a representative from the Cohuna Progress Association to join the Reference Group. I have been a member of Progress for a long while because I believed the interests

of the committee were vital to the school - a thriving community meant more students for the secondary college. And so I became the Progress Association's representative.

I am a link between the Progress Association and the North Central CMA. I pass information to the Progress Association which then gets distributed through its networks. Hopefully I am helping spread the CMA's news and views.

I love just sitting by the water, either the creek or the river, and having a fire to boil the billy and cook a barbecue. I like getting out into the bush and collecting fire wood.

I love taking my grandchildren out and watch them make bush cubby houses. In the past, my staff had a night with a camp oven tea and it became a competition to see who could put on the most style. The forest provides an opportunity to be outside, enjoy the bush by day or night, absorb the tranquility and appreciate nature.

I don't have favourite spot; it is just a matter of going somewhere in the bush.