

ground cover



NORTH CENTRAL
Catchment Management Authority
Connecting Rivers, Landscapes, People

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

July 10

A message from the Regional Landcare Coordinator

Hi everyone,

The due date for Second Generation Landcare Grants has just passed! I know many of you spent a great deal of time finalising your applications and making final touches before you sent them in. So you might ask, what happens to the applications once they arrive at North Central Catchment Management Authority (CMA)? Well all of the applications are copied and sent to the Standing Grants Committee which is an official grants panel appointed by the North Central CMA Board. The committee includes North Central CMA staff and representatives from the Board and Natural Resource Management Committee, as well as representatives from the Department of Primary Industries and the Department of Sustainability and Environment. Each grant application is reviewed by the committee and is individually assessed against the regional guidelines. Thankfully I am not tasked with assessing your applications on my own, as they all sound great – given the phone calls I have taken!

Who's talking about networks? Representatives from ten Campaspe Shire Landcare groups met in Rochester on Tuesday 22 June. The groups got together to explore the idea of forming a Landcare Network in the area. At the North Central CMA sponsored function, Mal Brown, from the newly formed Loddon Plains Landcare Network, offered participants the opportunity to discuss the pros and cons of forming a Network. The benefits raised included increased access to funding and resources, the ability to work on bigger projects at landscape scale, fellowship and shared learning, and a larger labour force. The concerns raised included the loss of identity, extra bureaucracy, time, commitment and the need for a facilitator. The night finished with a celebratory dinner and a presentation by Rhonda Day from the Shire of Campaspe to dedicated Landcarer Dallas Wyatt from the Kanyapella Koyuga group, who is leaving the shire.

What a great turnout for the Landcare bus tour in Kerang on Sunday 27 June! Fifty-one people from as far afield as Bendigo, Kyabram and Riddell's Creek, turned up on a very chilly Sunday morning to learn more about Indigenous Cultural Heritage. Kerang's SES unit provided a fantastic morning tea for the group before they were given a heritage induction from North Central CMA's Indigenous facilitator, Mark Pietzsch and Barapa Barapa Nation Aboriginal Corporation member Wayne Webster.

The morning included an overview of the Aboriginal Heritage legislation and a demonstration of the Aboriginal Heritage planning tool; a quick way to show compliance to the Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006. The group then headed out to the Reedy Lake Cultural Trail where Barapa Barapa representatives performed a smoking ceremony. The highlights of the day included some impromptu boomerang throwing, and the opportunity to walk and talk along the Reedy Lake Cultural Trail with the Kerang Wetland Indigenous Enhancement Crew, looking at sites which included a scar tree and 5,500 year old burial site.

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Just before I sign off this edition of Groundcover I thought you might like to know about the safe arrival of North Central's newest Landcarer! Former Acting Regional Landcare Coordinator Mel Taube's little girl Poppy May made her entrance into the world at two minutes to midnight on Thursday 17 June. Both are home and doing well.

Finally I would like to thank Virginia Adrian for compiling Groundcover to date; she has done a fantastic job! With the new financial year we have had a re-alignment in funding, so in an effort to get the greatest value out of the money we receive, we will now be producing Groundcover in-house.

We encourage everyone to continue contributing useful information to include in Groundcover each month by emailing: landcare@nccma.vic.gov.au with 'Groundcover' in the subject line, or by calling our office on 03 5448 7124.

Warm regards,

Jodie Odgers

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NEWS

Love me tender

As announced last month, a total of 57 landholders in North Central Victoria will share \$1.4 million in funding after their successful applications to the Victorian Government's latest round of the BushTender scheme

Under the scheme, about 2000 hectares of indigenous vegetation on private land will be protected and enhanced, with landholders being paid for their management services. Such services include planting native trees and shrubs, controlling weeds, and fencing areas to exclude livestock and/or promote more appropriate grazing management.

This round of the scheme ran in the City of Greater Bendigo, and parts of the Loddon, Central Goldfields, Mount Alexander, Hepburn, Macedon and Mitchell shires.

Around 22,000 hectares of native vegetation on private land have been managed and protected through the BushTender program since 2001. The program is run in a different catchment area every year.

For more information on BushTender go to www.dse.vic.gov.au/nativevegetation.

Ideas for Tree Day

The aims of National Tree Day are to inspire, educate and recruit Australians to actively care for the land and create future generations of 'committed environmental custodians'. We would all like to see that!

This year, National Tree Day, organised by Planet Ark in partnership with Toyota Australia, is coming up on Sunday 1 August and, as many groups know, this is a great opportunity to organise a community tree-planting, street stall or display to promote our fabulous plants – and our fabulous Landcare groups.

If you have organised a planting event in your area and would like to attract more volunteers, register on the website. Some groups from our region, including Bald Hills-Creswick, Sutton Grange, Castlemaine and Wedderburn Community House, have already posted their details.

However, if the idea of planting just one more tree makes you feel like you need a holiday, pick up a pen and start writing something for the 2010 Australian Tree Stories Competition. You will be in the running for the great prize of \$1000, to be redeemed at selected eco resorts around Australia.

Your favourite tree story needs to be told in 300 words or less. Enter online by 31 August.

Schools Tree Day, a popular adjunct to National Tree Day, is on 30 July. Last year more than 200,000 students from around the nation got stuck into hundreds of planting projects. One excellent reward for kids was seeing their teachers get their hands dirty!

To complement the hands and knees stuff, Planet Ark is also running a schools competition, where students are being invited to persuade a selected audience that life is better with trees. Our local kids know all about this, and have a great chance to win some of the \$10,000 in cash prizes on offer. Students work as a team to create a communication piece in a selected medium, including a website, TV advertisement, poster, brochure or milk carton panel.

The 'Life is Better With Trees' section on the Planet Ark website lists some fantastic resources to get everyone thinking. Entries close on 17 September.

For more information on all these initiatives, and extras to help you organise and promote an event, go to www.treeday.planetark.org.

Locusts on the map

As many of our more northern farmers are unfortunately only too aware, the plague locust situation is shaping up to be the worst in 40 years.

You can now see a graphic representation of this problem and report egg-laying sites via a new map. The site also has links to Department of Primary Industries updates, fact sheets and information on control. Go to www.locustmap.com.au.

The Australian Plague Locust is a native Australian insect that can aggregate into dense swarms - with devastating effects on farm production, as well as parks and gardens, bowling greens, golf courses and vegetable gardens.

The Victorian Government will reimburse farmers 100 per cent of the purchase price of registered chemicals used to treat locust hoppers on their properties in the upcoming spring, when millions are expected to hatch.

The Department of Primary Industries (DPI) says it is important to control locusts early in the season to minimise potential damage to crops and pastures. Locusts are easier to control in the early life-cycle stage when they are 'hoppers' and unable to fly.

DPI is monitoring the situation and community members are urged to report significant locust sightings, egg-laying and damage as soon as possible. To make a report or for more information phone 1300 13 5559.

For a forecast of locust hatching and development times for Victoria read the Australian Government's locust bulletin at www.daff.gov.au/animal-plant-health/locusts.

Carla and co take the prize

Huntly Primary School, which has a strong environmental education program, celebrated its 150th anniversary on 12 June, aided and abetted by North Central CMA staff and the Northern Bendigo Landcare Group.

Along with other Huntly businesses and community groups, the Landcare group and North Central CMA teamed up to



organise a float in the celebratory procession to highlight the working partnerships between themselves and the school.

The judges were impressed by the colour, information, decorations and happy faces, rewarding the efforts of organisers Nicole Howie (Landcare group) and Angela Gladman (North Central CMA), past students and siblings with the trophy for the best float.

And of course North Central CMA's mascot 'Carla the Ibis' is always a showstopper, particularly when she hands out show bags to those lining the procession route.

Huntly Primary School was the 2009 ResourceSmart Victorian Energy Smart School of the Year. Just one of its environmental initiatives is the propagation of the rare Whirrakee Wattle, endemic to the Huntly area, for the Northern Bendigo Landcare Group.

The Whirrakee Wattle seedlings will be used to revegetate the historic Huntly cemetery when it celebrates its 140th anniversary on 10 October from 11am to 3pm. For more information contact Nicole Howie on 03 5448 8244 or email dnhowie@bigpond.com.

Landcare in Canberra spotlight

The outstanding commitment and hard work of Landcarers from around Australia was celebrated last month at the 2010 National Landcare Awards in Canberra.

Unfortunately our north central region representative – the Barapa Barapa Indigenous work crew – missed out on the biggest prize in the indigenous award. But congratulations guys for making it all the way to the finals.

For details of all winners and finalists (and a great photo of the madly delighted Strong family) go to www.landcareonline.com.au.

Capture Kalimna Park

Kalimna Park is a bushland reserve and part of the Castlemaine Diggings National Heritage Park. It is well known for its box-ironbark woodland and scenic views, as well supporting one of only three Victorian populations of the endangered Eltham Copper Butterfly.

The Friends of Kalimna Park are running a photography competition to highlight the treasures of the area. Prizes of \$500 for the open section and \$200 for the student section are on offer. Entries close on 31 July.

The Friends have been involved in revegetation, weed clearing, walks and enjoyment of the park since way back in 1971. Well done folks! New members are always welcome.

For guidelines, more information and entry forms for the photography competition go to www.centralvic.net/kalimnapotos. For more information about group activities or to join the group, email: intouch@netcon.net.au.

Capture Campaspe

Residents of Campaspe Shire who are keen photographers are invited to get clicking and enter the shire's upcoming photographic competition.

The idea is to capture images relating to the environment, natural resource management and/or Landcare within the shire. The winning entries will be featured in next year's Campaspe Shire environmental calendar 2011. For more details contact Rhonda Day on 1300 666 535.

Landcare kicks on

Well, Landcare has finally taken a punt and kicked an important goal in the big smoke. Yes, Landcaring footy fans, on 4 July the first-ever Landcare-branded Australian Football League match was played at the mighty 'MCG'.

This brilliant piece of marketing was the brainchild of the West Gippsland Catchment Management Authority and the Richmond Football Club. The aim was to promote greater awareness of GippsLandcare and Landcare in Victoria.

The Tigers really got behind the initiative, with some fair dinkum information about Landcare featuring on their official web site.

Our own footy-netball clubs and landcare groups often have a close affiliation, particularly in smaller communities. If the AFL can do it, we can too!

Remnants paper released

The Victorian Environmental Assessment Council (VEAC) released the discussion paper for its Remnant Native Vegetation Investigation late last month.

VEAC is now inviting submissions to the paper, which will assist it to formulate its final report, to be submitted to the Minister for Environment and Climate Change by March 2011.

If you care about how native vegetation contributes to Victoria's sustainable landscapes, biodiversity conservation and recreation activities, or have views about how it should be managed to improve ecological connectivity, this is an opportunity to be heard. Submissions close on 30 August. Go to www.veac.vic.gov.au.

Final call for framework comments

The development of the Australian Framework for Landcare, which will guide us into the future, is continuing. The framework has been drafted by the reference group, which is made up of Landcare community members.

It has been working to ensure that views expressed by the Landcare community during the consultation period



are accurately reflected in the document. The consultation period concluded with discussions at the National Landcare Forum in March.

The draft framework is now in the final comment stage and submissions can be made until 30 July online. Go to www.landcarefacilitator.com.au/public/content.

Alligator in Bendigo Creek

One of only two Victorian regional infestations of Alligator Weed – a State Prohibited Weed - has been removed from the Bendigo Creek at Golden Square.

A State Prohibited Weed is the highest category of pest plants, and the Department of Primary Industries is responsible for their eradication on both public and private land. DPI hopes the massive mechanical excavation operation has successfully removed all plants, including roots.

Alligator Weed can quickly dominate a waterway, out-competing all other vegetation, interfering with irrigation systems, affecting water quality and flow regimes, reducing crop production and damaging pasture composition. Small fragments can easily spread downstream.

The works will also prevent the weed from spreading downstream to important environmental sites such as Kow Swamp.

Funding announcement

Our own Woodend and Five Mile Creek Landcare Group heard it first when the Victorian Government's Environment and Climate Change Minister Gavin Jennings recently announced \$9.9 million funding for Landcare. The funding will secure the state's Regional Landcare Coordinator positions beyond June 30 2010 and continue funding the Volunteer Recruitment Initiative.

Blitz seeks new species

Scientists believe that a whopping three quarters of Australia's native flora and fauna have not yet been identified and named.

So in this International Year of Biodiversity, the Australian Government and multiple partners have launched the Bush Blitz project, which aims to complete six major surveys a year around Australia in national reserves.

The surveys will be carried out by teams of 12 scientists, who will have their work cut out because 45 per cent of the continent has never been comprehensively surveyed before.

It is expected Bush Blitz will uncover hundreds of new species, provide baseline data to help monitor and protect our biodiversity in the future, and take a national snapshot of the plants and animals protected by the National Reserve System.

Australia's reserve system is made up of national parks, indigenous lands, reserves run by non-profit conservation organisations and areas on private farming land.

The project will be seeking volunteers to work as 'citizen scientists'. For more information and to check out newly discovered species go to www.bushblitz.org.au.

Rabbits feel the heat

The fires at Redesdale were devastating for many, but at least one positive has emerged – the reduced cover for rabbits has resulted in the Department of Primary Industries (DPI) deciding to run a strategic warren-ripping program on seven properties in the district.

The program will complement work carried out by district landholders in the past, and what DPI describes as "a high standard of land management practices". It will help achieve long term rabbit control in the district.

DPI research has found that well managed and maintained ripping programs are the most effective solution, both immediately and in the longer term, for achieving and keeping rabbit numbers low at a minimum cost.

Climate watchers wanted

Landcare Australia is running a program to encourage people to become "climate watchers" during Landcare Week. The idea is to help scientists identify seasonal climate variations by observing what the plants and animals are getting up to: when frogs call, birds migrate and plants flower.

Anyone can participate, and schools are particularly invited to join the program. When you register you will also gain access to an interactive on line forum. This should be pretty lively: there's always something to say about the weather! To register go to <http://eepurl.com/z-Zr>.

ClimateWatch is a permanent (not just Landcare Week) climate change monitoring program that allows ordinary people to be involved in collecting and recording data that will help shape the country's scientific response to climate change.

The website is attractive, with all sorts of interesting tidbits about indigenous plants and animals, field guides, descriptions of habitat, and information about what to observe and when. Have a look at www.climatewatch.org.au.

Don't forget Landcare Week runs from 6 to 13 September. It's our week folks, so let's toast and celebrate our achievements. You can register for an activity kit on the Landcare Australia Ltd. Website <http://svc018.wic008tv.server-web.com/index.asp>.

Latest on soil carbon

The Bureau of Rural Sciences has revised its sensible booklet 'Soil Carbon Management and Carbon Trading', which can be downloaded for free. It's a timely release, with soil carbon very much on the agenda at the moment.

This is a user-friendly booklet with a lot of clearly explained information including the role of soil in the carbon cycle, what affects soils' ability to absorb additional carbon, and soil carbon and carbon trading.

Practical information includes a definition of soil carbon, benefits and services of soil carbon to farm sustainability and productivity, and management practices that can increase soil carbon.

But the guide warns that measuring organic soil carbon for carbon trading can be difficult and expensive. Check it out at www.daff.gov.au/brs.

COURSES

Holistic approach to grazing

Fusion Farms is bringing US holistic management expert Kirk Gadzia to Australia for a three-day intensive course at Woodend.

To be held at Taranaki Farm from 4 to 6 August, this workshop will address soil fertility, land health and farm profits, with a focus on understanding the central role livestock management, including time-controlled grazing, can play in farm and soil regeneration.

Participants will learn simple and effective planning methods in a relaxed, interactive atmosphere, with open discussion and practical examples. Kirk Gadzia is USA Holistic Management's top trainer and an author, and consults internationally.

The cost of the course is \$650. For more information contact Ben Falloon on 0488 031 484. For more information and to book go to www.regenag.com/workshops/.

Farmers should note that this is a FarmReady Approved course (number FRTC00740) so you may be eligible for reimbursement of the cost from the Australian Government. Check the FarmReady website www.farmready.gov.au/.

Click go the shears

Wedderburn Community House is again running its popular wool handling course, which will run from 13 to 24 September at Nardoo Farm, near Wedderburn. The course is run by Graeme Shearer (no kidding), a registered training provider.

Participants, who must be 15 or over, will gain their Certificate Two in Wool Handling, plus additional modules which are part of the accredited Certificate Two in Shearing. (Further training is needed to become a fully qualified shearer.)

Course modules include penning up, board duties, and assisting with pressing, shearing and crutching, as well as workplace communications, and occupational health and safety.

The cost of the course is \$450 and organisers can help to billet participants if needed. Demand is usually keen, so register as soon as possible. Contact Stephen Colbert on 03 5494 3489 or email Stephen.wcnh@bigpond.com.

EVENTS

Here comes the bride

Unfortunately it's been a good season for Bridal Creeper, a highly invasive weed in our more southern areas, and one that is very tricky to eradicate. Formerly tiny infestations have suddenly exploded on some sites.

Fortunately, the Nuggetty Land Protection Group has been doing some great work with a biological control agent over the past six years, and now wants to pass the benefits on to other groups.

The group's Ian Grenda says Bridal Creeper rust was introduced to the area about six years ago. Last year, with a bit more rain, it had a great impact and this year it is looking good too.

The success has prompted the group to run a Bridal Creeper control field day on 14 August, where bags of rust will be given away to participants.

The day will start with a talk on the origin of Bridal Creeper and different control methods. There will be a talk and a demonstration of chemical control, including effective chemicals, and when and how to use them.

There will also be a demonstration on how to make spore water and physically transfer the rust fungus to the new host plant. Participants are invited to stay for a sausage in bread, a cuppa and a chat.

The event, to be held at 78 Brown's Road, Nuggetty, starts at 1.30pm. Follow the signs from the corner of Nuggetty and Brown's roads. For more information phone Ian Grenda on 0412 015 807

Soil health seminar

The Shire of Campaspe's Environmental Projects Officer Rhonda Day has advised us of a free soil health seminar being held at Kyabram in September. The date is yet to be confirmed and we will publish more details in the next issue of Groundcover.

Experts will present up to date information on the latest techniques for improving soil health, including organic, quality assured products. The region's new compost spreader will also be in action on the day. Lunch will be provided. To register your interest and for more information, contact Rhonda on 0429 968 917.



NETWORK NEWS

Loddon Plains to incorporate

The executive of the Loddon Plains Landcare Network (LPLN) – which is now made up of 13 Landcare groups – has determined to incorporate the network in its own right. It will do so at an annual general meeting from 7-8 pm on 20 July, at the Loddon Shire Council offices, Serpentine.

Nomination forms have been sent to network members for the election of one of six positions on the network's committee of management. For more information contact secretary Michael Moore at emandem@iinet.net.au.

One of the reasons for the formation of the LPLN is to explore and seek funding for Landcare in the Loddon region from non-government funding sources. The network has also submitted a submission to the Australian Government for a Landcare facilitator for the Loddon area.

The current executive comprises four volunteers: Mal Brown (chair), Penny Wall (deputy chair), Jean McClymont (treasurer) and Michael Moore (secretary).

Connecting with resources

Connecting Country has posted some new information on its website which is sure to be useful to Mount Alexander Shire and other Landcarers.

The new resources include an information paper on the importance of using local provenance plants in revegetation projects, a list of contractors for environmental works, a best practice guide for revegetation from planning through to planting, and guidelines for managing Indigenous cultural heritage sites. You can also check out information on pest plant and animal control. Go to www.connectingcountry.org.au/resources-links.

Connecting Country will also be conducting a quarterly review of the website and welcomes your input. To make recommendations an/or provide feedback email: lmcdonald@connectingcountry.org.au.

FUNDING NEWS

Community Action Grants open

This year's round of the Australian Government's Community Action Grants, a component of the Caring for our Country program, will open on 6 July and will close on 31 August.

Along with the Victorian Government's Second Generation Landcare grants, this is a good way to secure smaller project grants between \$5000 and \$20,000.

Last year's Community Action Grants round provided \$7 million for 425 environmental and sustainable agriculture projects around the nation, including several from the North Central CMA region.

The guidelines and hard copy application form will be available from the Caring for our Country website at www.nrm.gov.au or phone 1800 552 008.

Junior Landcare not just for schools

The second round of the 2010 Junior Landcare grants program will close on 6 August. And you don't have to be a school or junior Landcare group to apply – day care centres, kindergartens and youth groups such as Scouts are all eligible.

Coles Junior Landcare School Garden Grants provide funding up to \$1000 to establish or develop gardens in schools and communities, with a focus on bush tucker, water wise and/or vegetable gardens.

Yates Environmental Management Planning Grants also provide funding of up to \$1000 for schools to create a school environment management plan, or to carry out works and activities identified in a plan they have completed.

Some regional primary schools to benefit from Yates grants include St Arnaud, for its "veggie garden reborn" project; Creswick North, for chooks, deciduous trees and bird feeders; Huntly for its "filling in the habitats" project; and Guildford, for establishing a native seed orchard. There's some inspiration for you!

For more information and application forms, go to www.juniorlandcare.com.au.

Funds from Connecting Country

The Connecting Country project would like to hear from large and small landholders in the Mount Alexander Shire who want to improve their landscapes.

For the next three years, the project will offer about \$350,000 a year in funding for on-ground works, including on-farm trials for grazing and revegetation, protecting waterways, and linking and improving existing remnant native vegetation.

For more information or to discuss your proposed project, contact Latarnie McDonald at lmcdonald@connectingcountry.org.au.



Lights, camera, action!

To celebrate World Environment Day on 5 June 2010, Canon Australia announced they are now accepting entries to the 2010 Canon Australia Environmental Grants. The program provides valuable assistance to organisations of all sizes working on environmental initiatives across Australia by rewarding them with Canon digital imaging products to help them achieve the goals of their projects. There are five grants worth \$5000 each available.

You can apply by mail or email, with grants closing 31 August 2010. For more information contact Canon 13 13 83 (freecall) or jump on their website www.canon.com.au. Go to 'About Canon' and then select 'Sustainability and Environment' to find out more about the grant.

Special screenings

Here's a novel way for your group to enjoy a great social night out and even raise funds: talk to the people at Eaglehawk's historic Star Cinema about a movie night.

All you need to do is tell the community-friendly cinema about the kind of films your group is interested in, and confirm the film and the date. Then produce, promote and sell your own tickets, and organise a yummy supper and maybe even a door prize.

The Star is a community operated, not for profit, independent cinema, screening art house and crossover movies, and enhancing the experience with comfy crimson couches, and a licensed bar serving up local wines and snacks.

By organising an event at the Star you will also be helping another local group that relies on community support. Contact Sonja or Hannah on 03 5446 2025 or 03 5446 2526 or visit www.starcinema.org.au.

NB: The North Central CMA sponsors the wonderful community-driven 'Star Cinema', so if you have any great ideas of how we could work together on something, please feel free to also contact Christine Taylor, Events and Marketing Coordinator via email: christine.taylor@nccma.vic.gov.au or telephone 03 5440 1870.