

ground cover



NORTH CENTRAL
Catchment Management Authority
Connecting Rivers, Landscapes, People

www.nccma.vic.gov.au

April 2011

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

A message from the Regional Landcare Coordinator

Hi everyone,

As I mentioned in the last newsletter it is almost Landcare Grants time again! The *Victorian Landcare Grants* will open in early May and each group will receive a grants package in the post. I will also be able to send electronic versions to those who request them. I will be putting the information on the Landcare page of the North Central Catchment Management Authority (CMA) website and the North Central page on the Victorian Landcare Gateway. There are a few changes to the program this year but they should actually make the process easier - hopefully you'll all agree! There will be two types of grants this year: projects grants (up to \$20,000) and maintenance and start up grants (up to \$1,000). All of the groups that are currently completing their 2010-11 Second Generation Landcare Grants are encouraged to apply again. So get your thinking caps on guys, we had some pretty great applications last year and I am sure we will get some exceptional ones this year!

We will again be running community information sessions for the Victorian Landcare Grants program and I will provide the dates and locations when they have been confirmed. At some of the information sessions I would like to run a grants writing session that will not only help you in applying for the Victorian Landcare Grants, but also other funding sources such as the Caring for our Country program, philanthropic groups, trusts and local council grant programs.

I have been fortunate enough to get out of the office over the last month attending workshops, forums and community meetings. I attended the very timely weed management workshop in Kyneton hosted by Ashley Beven, Regional Landcare Facilitator, North Central CMA. There was a great turn out from the local community to hear several guest speakers talk about integrated weed management, herbicide resistance, weed classifications and biological control. I also got the opportunity to hear two fantastic guest speakers at the 2nd Annual North Central Regional Soils Forum held in Bendigo. Julian Cribb, well known author, was the lead speaker and discussed the 'coming famine', the global food crisis and what we can do to avoid it. DPI's Productive Soils Specialist, Declan McDonald, spoke on the topic of soil management and how we need to better understand the ecological processes so that we can manage our soils to ensure efficient production.

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It is time to recognise the outstanding achievements of Landcarers in our community. Nominations for the Victorian and National Landcare Awards are now open. This is your chance to honour the people who make a positive difference to your local environment. For more information, read the 'Landcare Awards' article in this edition of Groundcover. There are a lot of people in this region that are worthy of nomination!

Before I sign off I want to let you all know that 2011 is the 25th anniversary of Landcare in Victoria. What an achievement! Landcare began in the North Central Catchment in 1986, when a group of farmers near St Arnaud formed the first Landcare group at Winjallok. The North Central Landcare team at the CMA is hoping to hold an event that will celebrate this significant milestone later in the year. In the meantime, if you are having an event and wish to celebrate 25 years of Landcare, there are logos available on the Victorian Landcare Gateway (www.landcarevic.net.au).

Wishing you all a safe and happy Easter.
Until next time, warm regards!

Jodie Odgers

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Update from the Regional Landcare Facilitator (RLF)

It has been a busy start to the year with workshops around the catchment, a trip to Canberra and lots of plans for the coming months.

To kick off the year, a free public forum 'What's up with the weather? – Where to now for agriculture' was held in St Arnaud, in partnership with the Victorian Farmers Federation. Attendees learnt about the weather patterns influencing agriculture in Victoria and strategies to manage climate variability on farm. Guest speakers included Professor Tim Reeves, Senior DPI Climate Scientists and Wimmera farmer Susan Findlay Tickner. Professor Reeves highlighted the need for agriculture to adapt to climate change at the paddock, farm, business and catchment level. To learn more about the forum presentations visit the Victorian Landcare Gateway website (www.northcentral.landcarevic.net.au). Presentation notes can be found under the 'Resources' tab. There will be a similar forum in Swan Hill during May 2011, so watch out for more details.

At the start of March I travelled to Canberra to meet with the other RLFs from around the country and learn about the Australian Government's proposed Carbon Farming Initiative (CFI). Over two days we heard from the policy makers, scientists and industry experts involved in the creation of the CFI. The initiative provides a means by which landholders can be rewarded, through carbon credits, for changes they make to their current land management practices that result

in carbon sequestration. Activities may include fertiliser management, reduced livestock emissions, soil carbon and reforestation. The legislation for the CFI has just been introduced to Parliament and the Australian Government is aiming to pass the legislation before 1 July 2011. For further information on the CFI visit the Department of Climate Change and Energy Efficiency website (www.climatechange.gov.au/cfi).

Two weed management workshops were also held during March at Kyneton and Toolleen. Topics covered included herbicide resistance, weed identification and the Victorian State Government's classification and prioritisation of weed species. The Kyneton workshop also included a presentation by Greg Lefoe, DPI, on the use of biocontrols to reduce weed infestations. Presentation notes will soon be loaded onto the North Central page of the Victorian Landcare Gateway under the 'Resources' tab. We are hoping to run more workshops in the near future, so if you are interested in attending a weed management workshop contact either myself or Jodie.

Ashley Beven

Regional Landcare Facilitator

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AWARDS

Honour your local heroes today

Nominations are now open for the 2011 State and Territory Landcare Awards, giving everyone across Australia the opportunity to honour the people who make a positive difference to their local environment. The prestigious Landcare Awards recognise the invaluable work done by committed volunteers across the country on a daily basis protecting and restoring our natural resources. All winners from the 2011 State and Territory Awards will go forward as nominees in the biennial National Landcare Awards which will take place in 2012.

Landcare is currently encouraging people to nominate anyone they feel deserves to have their efforts recognised. All types of environmental and agricultural volunteers can be nominated for any type of onground work which includes a huge range of activities such as sustainable farming, community gardening, habitat restoration, caring for rivers and creeks, preserving coastal landscapes and much, much more.

Landcare Award Categories

1. Australian Government Individual Landcarer Award
2. Australian Government Natural Resource Management (NRM) Award
3. Australian Government Innovation in Sustainable Farming Practices Award
4. Australian Government Local Landcare Facilitator/Coordinator Award
5. Coastcare Award
6. Rural Press Primary Producer Award
(Vic entrants should not submit a nomination for this award as nominees will be the ten regional winners of the DPI Sustainable Farming Award)
7. Landcare Community Group Award
8. Westpac Education Award
9. Urban Landcare Award
10. Leighton Holdings Indigenous Award
11. Be Natural Young Landcare Leader Award
12. Local Government Landcare Partnership Award

Victorian Categories and more info on next page...



Victorian Categories

1. Heather Mitchell Memorial Fellowship - \$5,000
2. CitiPower and Powercor Landcare Network Award - \$5,000
3. Dr Sidney Plowman Travel and Study Award - \$4,000
4. DPI Sustainable Farming Award (regional) - \$500 per CMA region
5. The Bushfire Recovery Award - \$15,000
6. Long Service to Landcare Award - \$1,000
7. Long Service to Landcare – Honour Roll

Nominations can be lodged between Monday 2 May 2011 and Friday 1 July 2011. Electronic nominations are preferred; however mailed nominations will be accepted. For more information or to download the *Criteria Brochure* and *Awards Entry Form* go to the Landcare Australia Ltd. website (www.landcareonline.com.au). All applications are required to demonstrate how they have met all of the judging criteria or are working towards meeting the criteria. Supporting evidence will need to be provided for any claims being made. You may nominate a group or a person from your community.

NEWS

Supporting farmers to explore sustainable agriculture options

To help support landholders within our region, the North Central CMA is proposing a number of workshops and farm extension activities. The activities are a part of the CMA's 'Adopting Sustainable Farming Practices' project to support farmers within the irrigation areas of the North Central Victorian region. The project will explore options for sustainable agriculture for farmers who are considering permanent sale of their water share by providing access to new information, trial results and demonstrations of a range of sustainable farming practices suited to local conditions.

A landholder mentoring group will be formed to increase the localised and practical perspectives of the project. This group will consist of local farmers transitioning from intensive irrigation to other viable farming practices using innovative and productive alternatives.

The workshops and farm walks will be held over an 18 month period (from May 2011) and focus on a variety of topics suitable to the North Central irrigation region of Victoria. The project has been funded through the Australian Government's Caring for Our Country initiative.

Information packages and workshop planning are well under way, with a number of farm walks and workshops to be held in the near future. To register your interest or for further information on this project please contact Joel Spry at the North Central CMA on 03 5448 7124 or joel.spry@nccma.vic.gov.au.

Another new face at the North Central CMA!



I would like to take this opportunity to introduce myself – I'm Bambi Lees and I'm backfilling Mark Pietzch's role as Indigenous Facilitator for seven months. Mark has done a great job establishing procedures and policies that enable CMA staff and stakeholders to consider Aboriginal cultural values in the landscape as well as creating an organisational environment that is empathetic to the rights and aspirations of Aboriginal peoples.

To this end, I am on secondment from Parks Victoria to continue to provide support and direction to CMA staff, Board, Natural Resource Management Committee and project partners in the area of Indigenous engagement and cultural heritage management. I'm hoping to 'value add' wherever possible across the many and varied programs as well as getting out on *country* whenever the opportunity arises. I will endeavour in the short time I'm here to catch up with community groups; I welcome any queries, suggestions and ideas that you may have – I'm always up for a cuppa and a yarn!

Some of you may already know me and I look forward to reconnecting with you, but for those of you who don't, here's a quick profile!

Name: Bambi Lees – Bam for short

Born: 1966 Fremantle (W.A.) Adopted and relocated to Victoria by means of government removal policies/ assimilation legislation - often referred to as the Stolen Generation(s).

Mob: Thursday Island decent – Torres Strait.

Early Childhood: Western suburbs, Melbourne

Growing up: In Central Victoria – attended Daylesford Technical High School

Uni: Adventure Leadership/Outdoor Education, Bendigo College of Advanced Education (now known as La Trobe University)

NRM background: Park Ranger 1987 - 96, Indigenous Project Officer 2000 - present with Parks Victoria

Family: My partner Bryan, three girls all at high school, one dog and one cat

Footy Team: Richmond TIGERS

Committed to: caring for *country* for future generations.

Rare sun shines in Horsham

Article courtesy of DSE

It's the flora equivalent of a panda birth in captivity – the Horsham laboratory “hatching” of a rare orchid found in only two places in the world. The Brilliant Sun-orchid is the golden child of the specialist orchid growing facility at Horsham. It is one of several rare species being propagated by Environment Biodiversity Officer Dr Noushka Reiter. Noushka says the aim is to re-introduce them into secure sites in their natural range. Noushka and volunteer Wendy Bedggood, with support from several CMAs, are behind the growth of the tiny, beautiful Brilliant Sun-orchid, only two years after the propagation of threatened orchids began in Horsham.

Noushka said there are fewer than 30 Brilliant Sun-orchids in the wild and the plant's future was considered bleak. “This breakthrough is an important first and essential step in the long term recovery of the Brilliant Sun-orchid,” Noushka said. The federally-endangered species only occurs in the Wimmera and North Central catchments, favouring remnant Box-Ironbark forests.

Specialised propagation techniques are being used for the Brilliant Sun-orchid and 14 other rare orchid species. Techniques are being developed for another 10, including the Metallic Sun-orchid, Spiral Sun-orchid, Desert Greenhood, Candy Spider-orchid, Melblom's Spider-orchid and Elegant Spider-orchid. “We aim to re-introduce these species into secure sites in their natural range and to continue the essential survey, monitoring and protection works,” Noushka said. “We hope that – in the not too distant future – these rare blooms will be enjoyed by all.”



Brilliant Sun-orchid.

Photo: Courtesy Dr Noushka Reiter.



Metallic Sun-orchid.

Photo: Courtesy Dr Noushka Reiter.

Connecting Country's monitoring workshop

Sixty people attended the Connecting Country's Nest Box Monitoring Workshop in Campbell's Creek on 8 March. The evening was a great success with lots of audience participation and the organisers were delighted that the special children's activities complemented the evening's program.

The first speaker was Peter Johnson, Senior Biodiversity Officer, DSE, who has been monitoring Brush-tailed Phascogales (or Tuan) around Bendigo, Ballarat and Kinglake Ranges for ten years. Peter gave a comprehensive account of Brush-tailed Phascogales covering identification, habitat, behaviour and the importance of tree hollows for nesting. He pointed out that females require a minimum of 100ha each to survive and that 25 females constitutes a viable population. Thus a minimum of 2500ha is necessary to support a Brush-tailed Phascogale population. He also discussed current threats to Brush-tailed Phascogale populations posed by land fragmentation, conversion to small holdings, firewood collection and loss of large of trees.

Miles Geldard, a local landholder who has made 400 nest boxes for Connecting Country, outlined the extensive research that has backed up his approach to nest box construction and detailed the design and materials used for the next boxes.

Bryan McMullan, Connecting Country Project Officer, then described how landholders can be involved in monitoring the use of nest boxes by Brush-tailed Phascogales and other species. He explained that the optimum time for monitoring Brush-tailed Phascogales is March and April and that the process takes about 45 minutes. Monitors need to be set up with torches ten minutes before dusk and continue monitoring for at least half an hour after sunset.

In addition, Bryan will be examining and reporting on the habitation of 300 nest boxes which have been installed by Connecting Country. You can contact Bryan on Monday and Tuesdays at Connecting Country on 5472 1594 or email bryan@connectingcountry.org.au for further information.



Brush-tailed Phascogale, Chewton, 2010.

Photo: Courtesy Mike Grinter.

It's not too late to have your say on the review of Caring for Our Country

The review of the Caring for our Country (CfoC) natural resource management investment initiative is currently underway and it is not too late for you to have your say. The review will look at the effectiveness of the program, achievements to date and will explore options for natural resource management (NRM) delivery in the future.

An important part of the review will be consulting with Australia's NRM stakeholders. The views and experiences of CfoC's partners and stakeholders are an essential part of informing the review and identifying program improvements.

Specific feedback from the recipients and applicants of CfoC funding regarding the outcomes of investments will help tell the CfoC story and inform the review. Submissions are invited until Friday 20 May 2011. For information on the review or if you want to share your views on the initiative go to www.nrm.gov.au/review/index.

And the winners are...

Can we express a big "thank you" to all of the groups for returning and completing the 'Supporting your group survey' and 'Finding your group on the web'. We have completed the draw and the two groups that won the seed and seedlings to the value of \$200 are... Ravenswood Valley Landcare Group and Northern Bendigo Landcare Group.

COURSES & RESOURCES

Autumn fungi workshops

Join ecologist and environmental photographer, Alison Pouliot, as she holds an autumn series of Central Victorian Fungal Ecology Workshops. Whether you're interested in identifying, photographing, learning about the species you can safely consume, or you just wish to enjoy an autumn forest 'stroll of discovery' through this extraordinary kingdom, then these workshops are for you. Join Alison for a foray deep into our local forests for an illustrated journey into a little known world.

2011 Fungal Ecology Workshops

Saturday 30 April and Sunday 1 May - Woodend
Bookings: 03 5427 1845 or reception@wnci.com.au

Saturday 7 May and Sunday 8 May - Creswick
Bookings: 03 5345 2356 or creswick@ourneighbourhood.org.au

Saturday 14 May and Sunday 15 May - Trentham
Bookings: 03 5424 1354 or trentham@ourneighbourhood.org.au

Saturday 28 May and Sunday 29 May - Wedderburn
Bookings: 03 5494 3542 or Michael at emandem@iinet.net.au

2011 Fungal Ecology Seminars

Thursday 26 May - Castlemaine
Bookings: 03 5472 1594 or info@connectingcountry.org.au - No cost for this seminar.

For full workshop details visit www.alisonpouliot.com or contact Alison via email at alison@alisonpouliot.com.



Ecologist and Environmental Photographer, Alison Pouliot.
Photo: Courtesy Alison Pouliot.

Environmental Best Management Practice Workshop - Woodend

The Woodend Neighbourhood House is holding Environmental Best Management Practices Program (EBMP) workshops on Saturday 21 and 28 May from 9.45 am – 3.00pm. The free workshops at the Woodend Neighbourhood House at 47 Forest Street include a copy of the Environmental Best Management Practices (EBMP) workbook, EBMP computer program and tuition in completing the simple self assessment and action planning tools used during the EBMP process. A demonstration on how to use the EBMP web-based data base is also included.

Come along and learn how to undertake a self-assessment of environmental management of your farm. The EBMP workshop is sponsored by DPI Farm Plan 21 Climate Change Initiative. For more information on the workshops visit www.environmentalfarmplan.org.au. To make a booking contact Sarah at the Woodend Neighbourhood house on 03 5427 1845 or email coordinator@wnci.com.au.

What happens to the land following bushfire?

A series of short videos has been released by the Port Phillip and Westernport Catchment Management Authority (PPWCMA) with funding from the Australian Government's Caring for our Country program, about the most common land management issues faced by the community after the Black Saturday bushfires.

These videos are available to stream from the PPWCMA website (www.ppwcm.vic.gov.au/our-community/bushfire-resources/bushfire-recovery-on-private-land-documentary-series.aspx)

The series includes interviews with land management experts and locals about the steps they have taken to help their properties and environment recover. The six short documentaries cover native vegetation, weeds, native fauna, erosion, farm productivity and community recovery.

These stories provide valuable insight into what happens to land and the environment following a bushfire; what landowners should look out for and what issues to address first. Although the documentaries focus on the recovery from the Black Saturday fires, they are a valuable guide for all landholders whether they have experienced a bushfire or not.

For further information contact Kacie Melfi at the PPWCMA on 03 8781 7960 or kacie.melfi@ppwcm.vic.gov.au.

The annual Birds Australia report is out

The State of Australia's Birds report is now available on the Birds Australia website. The reports, produced annually since 2003, collate and disseminate information on trends in bird populations. The reports inform Australians of the status of the birds and help bring about improved understanding and better management of the land for birds and other biota. They also provide feedback to the dedicated thousands who volunteer their time and skills to monitor birds. Check out the report on the Birds Australia website (www.birdsaustralia.com.au/soab/state-of-australias-birds.html)

FUNDING NEWS

Celebrating women in Landcare

Landcare Australia acknowledges the vital contribution and role women play in Landcare, in rural and urban communities. To support projects that build the capacity of women, the Australian government is providing the Recognising Women Farmers Grant. Applications close on 28 March 2011. For more information or to get an application form visit the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry website www.daff.gov.au.

Would you like free trees for your next planting project?



The trees are all native tube stock and can be picked up from a local native nursery of your choice. Trees are given away in lots of fifteen and will be available up until September. These trees have been paid for by Victorian businesses that have made a commitment to the greening of our environment. Fifteen Trees was established to help support those who are looking after our native heritage. Trees are available for planting on both private and public land. To take up this offer, please send your details to Fifteen Trees, PO Box 290, Brown Hill 3350 or email to filippa@15trees.com.au.



Caring for our Country 2011-12 Grants NOW OPEN

Proposals for Landcare and environment projects are now invited under the Caring for our Country 2011-12 business plan. Up to \$178 million is available from the Federal Government to invest in projects that can be completed by June 2013. \$66 million has been set aside for base-level funding for regional NRM organisations, with the remainder falling under the open-call investment process. This provides an opportunity for diverse groups and organisations to obtain funding. Open-call projects should contribute to achieving outcomes in line with the six national priority areas for Caring for our Country and these priorities are:

1. increasing the National Reserve system;
2. biodiversity and national icons;
3. coastal environments and critical aquatic habitats;
4. sustainable farm practices;
5. remote and northern Australia; and
6. community skills, knowledge and engagement.

Applications for open-call applications close 30 May 2011. Details on the application process and eligibility guidelines are on the Caring for our Country website www.nrm.gov.au.

The 2011-12 Community Action Grants round is expected to open for applications around May 2011. Applications will be invited from environmental, Indigenous, Landcare, Coastcare and sustainable agriculture community groups for grants of between \$5,000 and \$20,000 (GST exclusive) for a broad range of activities that will contribute to Caring for our Country national priorities. Guidelines and eligibility criteria will be available when the 2011-12 Community Action Grants round opens. Keep an eye out for details in future editions of Groundcover.

New grant rounds are coming your way soon - Landcare Australia

Keep an eye on the Landcare Australia website (www.landcareonline.com.au) over the coming weeks for the announcement of new grants programs funded by their corporate partners. If you are part of a local Landcare group or farming organisation, there may be something there for you!

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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