

North Central Chat

Keeping you up to date with all the Landcare and Waterwatch news



September 2023

A message from the Regional Landcare Coordinator

Hi everyone,

I'm excited to join the North Central CMA as the Regional Landcare Coordinator. I've enjoyed chatting with some of you over the past couple of weeks and getting to know how things work.

A bit about me. I live in Maryborough and prior to coming on board as the RLC, I was with Agriculture Victoria for 18 years. I may have met some of you during that time when my team and I delivered drought support activities or soil, water and stock containment workshops. A few years ago, I left Agriculture Victoria to take up a role with DELWP (now DEECA) in the Environmental Volunteering program, which was great preparation for the RLC role. I'm looking forward to getting out and about and hearing all the wonderful things going on in Landcare in our region. I'm always happy to chat, so please feel free to give me a call.

September is National Biodiversity Month. It's a great time to promote the importance of connecting with and caring for nature in all its diversity. There are a few ways you can celebrate National Biodiversity Month, courtesy of the Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water.

1 September – National Wattle Day

Visit wattle in your local area and share a photo of it on social media - tag with #GetIntoNature, #ConnectingWithNature and/or #ConnectingWithCountry

You could also make wattle seed damper but it's important to buy the wattle seed rather than harvesting it yourself as some wattles can be toxic.

7 September – National Threatened Species Day

Join the annual [#Threatened Species Bake Off](#) to raise the profile of your local threatened species.



Photo: Belinda Pritchard, Regional Landcare Coordinator

Go on a Bush Blitz [expedition](#) in your backyard or visit a local park. Learn more about your neighbours – the local species in the nature areas near you!

Connect with nature and connect with a community share your observations of nature with the [iNaturalistAU](#) community and get help with identification.

Learn from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples about how to deeply experience and look after Country; find out the names of your local plants and animals in the local Indigenous language.

Check out [Biodiversity Month - DCCEEW](#) for more ways to celebrate biodiversity every month.

Finally, save the date for Chicks in the Sticks on October 28!

Happy reading,

Belinda Pritchard

Regional Landcare Coordinator
North Central CMA

Phone: 0408 342 593

Email: Belinda.pritchard@nccma.vic.gov.au



Connecting rivers, landscapes, people

The North Central Catchment Management Authority (CMA) acknowledges Traditional Owners and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples within the region, their rich cultures, spiritual connection to Country.

www.nccma.vic.gov.au



News...

Launch of the new Nature Network



Restoring landscapes with community

Eight local conservation and community groups have joined forces to focus their actions on identifying ecological threats and restoring key ecosystems across eastern and southern Bendigo.

The Nature Network was officially formed on July 31 and is made up of Axe Creek Landcare, Longlea and District Landcare, Mandurang Landcare, Northern Bendigo Landcare, FOSSALs (Friends of Strathfieldsaye Streams and Land), Junortoun Community Action Group, Friends of the Whipstick, and Ironbark Gully Friends Landcare.

The Network marked its launch by releasing its new branding, and its Blueprint for Action, highlighting priorities aimed at restoring ecosystems and connecting the community to the landscape.

Nature Network Facilitator Kristie Smith from the North Central Catchment Management Authority (CMA) said one of the key threats to the region's natural assets stemmed from urbanisation.

"There are also issues such as ecology fragmentation, waterway changes, soil and habitat degradation, clearing of mature trees, climate change, and competition for resources," she said.

"On top of that, we've seen humans disconnect from nature and a sense of helplessness develop across the region, which is something Nature Network wants to overcome.

"Nature Network brings eight smaller groups together, which means strength in numbers as well as all the benefits of sharing resources and skills.

"And the blueprint gives a clear plan of the projects and activities we believe will help restore the box ironbark forests and grassy woodlands that are under increased pressure."

Ecologist, author, and nature photographer Chris Tzaros was the special guest speaker at the Network launch. He said the conservation priorities to the south and east of Bendigo were clear.

"Lowlands and gullies, such as creeks and drainage lines, have the most fertile and diverse habitats and are often overlooked," he said.

"Another priority is mature trees, which serve a whole range of ecological functions. They need to be protected and supported.

"Mammals, birds, reptiles, frogs, and fungi also rely on habitat's structurally complex ground layers such as fallen branches, leaf litter, and rocks.

"Historically, this kind of habitat was cleared, but revegetating complex understories, particularly on private land, to achieve connectivity and to support mature trees, needs to be a focus."

Local environmental legend Ken Beasley will head Nature Network, with support from an experienced and passionate Board and a raft of volunteers across the region.

The Nature Network Blueprint for Action can be found on the North Central CMA website on the [Landcare Links](#) page: [Landcare | North Central Catchment Management Authority](#) (nccma.vic.gov.au)

The Victorian Landcare Program and Victorian Landcare Grants 2022 - Achievements and Outcomes

An update from DEECA

Environmental volunteer and Landcare groups, networks and individuals supported by the Victorian Landcare Program achieved some incredible results in 2022. For example, 12,686 volunteers acted for nature as part of the program, contributing a huge 288,986 volunteer hours with an economic value of \$12.06 million. [View a snapshot](#) of the 2022 Victorian Landcare Program and read the [Community Achievements and Outcomes Case Studies](#).

The Victorian Landcare Grants support Landcare and environmental volunteering groups and networks to undertake on-ground works, education and capacity building projects that protect and restore our land and natural environment. The community delivers amazing results for the environment through the [Victorian Landcare Grants](#) - outcomes achieved in 2022 include

improvements to 45,000 hectares of land and 414 community events. The Victorian Landcare Program and Grants support Biodiversity 2037, the Victorian Government’s long-term plan to protect Victoria’s environment.

Victorian Landcare Grants

The annual Victorian Landcare Grants support Landcare and environmental volunteer groups and networks to deliver on-ground works, education and capacity building projects to protect and restore the environment.

2022 Outcomes	Biodiversity 2037 Plan
<p>206 Projects delivered Outcomes included protecting threatened species and habitat, revegetating and controlling weeds, reducing rabbit numbers and engagement and education to connect communities with nature</p> <p>6,387 people participated in 414 community events e.g. workshops, field days, demonstrations delivered as part of grants projects</p> <p>Value for money 2022 Victorian Landcare Grants leveraged \$2.5 million through in-kind volunteer and staff hours, project support and financial co-contributions, on top of the \$4.1 million invested by the Victorian government</p>	<p>45,135 Ha of land improved (25,500 MCGs) including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Revegetation 705 Ha Weed Control 39,932 Ha Herbivore Control 4,270 Ha Habitat Protection 228 Ha protected by 3,559 Kms of fencing

Learn more: www.environment.vic.gov.au/landcare

Growing Habitat for Net-Zero in Central Victoria

Article by Narelle Beattie, North Central CMA Project Manager Community Carbon

The North Central Catchment Management Authority (CMA), together with the City of Greater Bendigo and Macedon Ranges, Hepburn, and Mount Alexander Shire Councils are seeking local landholders keen to undertake revegetation works on their properties.

The Community Carbon pilot project is about leveraging the carbon offset needs of local councils to provide financial support to the revegetation of valuable habitat across the region. Instead of the benefits going elsewhere by purchasing offsets from the open market, we want to keep them in our community and region.

We’re looking for local landholders to take part in the project and help Central Victoria grow to net zero.

Landholder benefits

Landholders will enjoy a range of benefits, including:

- attracting diverse wildlife
- improving the aesthetic appearance of their property
- reducing soil erosion
- improving soil health
- enhancing water quality.

As our focus is twofold: using carbon from plantings to offset emissions and revegetating precious native habitats.

How you can help

The first stage of this pilot project is to seek expressions of interest from local landholders.

We are particularly focused on identifying sites where the combined planting area is 10 hectares or more. However, smaller sites will still be considered.

Find out more!

For more information, including eligibility criteria, visit: www.nccma.vic.gov.au/climatechange/community-carbon

Contact

Narelle Beattie - Project Manager Community Carbon

Phone - 0417 620 398

Email - CommunityCarbon@nccma.vic.gov.au



Take part in the platy-project this September

Article by Australian Conservation Foundation

Have you ever spotted a platypus in the wild?

This September, nature-lovers are encouraged to head down to their local creek or river, to find a quiet spot to look for a platypus and record what they see.

It's all part of the platy-project, a citizen-science initiative brought to you by the Australian Conservation Foundation and the University of New South Wales.

Looking for a platypus as a part of the platy-project not only helps us better protect platypuses – it's also a great way to slow down, enjoy some fresh air and connect with nature.



Photo submitted to the platy-project by N. Anderson in 2022

How does the platy-project help protect platypuses?

Platypuses are one of Australia's most loved icons, but there is still much we don't know about where this (very elusive) animal lives. With platypus numbers sadly declining, these knowledge gaps are a huge barrier to advocating for better protections.

You can fill these gaps and help give platypuses the protections they need.

Everything we learn at every creek, river and waterway helps platypus thrive – and recording your activity if you don't see a platypus is just as valuable as if you are lucky enough to see one.

Register to take part at <https://www.acf.org.au/platy-project-signup> and get access to tips, videos and other resources to prepare you for your platypus search. The interactive platy-project map (developed by platypus scientists at UNSW) helps you find good places near you to try spotting a platypus and lets you record what you see.

Last year, more than one thousand people took part in the platy-project right across the platypus' range, from the tropics of Queensland to the temperate forests of Tasmania. You can help protect platypuses by making this year's platy-project bigger and better than ever.

For any questions about the platy-project, get in touch with the platy-project team at platypus@acf.org.au2023

Australia's first stocktake of climate adaptation activities

Article by National Environmental Science Program

Australia's first stocktake of climate adaptation activities has been launched by the hub at *Climate Adaptation 2023*.

The stocktake is being undertaken by the Climate Systems Hub's research project [Enabling best practice adaptation](#) to gauge Australia's progress on adapting to climate change.

Project lead Associate Professor Sarah Boulter emphasised the importance of this survey as currently there is no baseline on how Australia is adapting to our changing climate, although presentations and participation at *Climate Adaptation 2023* indicated a shift from research to practice.

"This will be the first time anyone has tried to take stock," Associate Professor Boulter said.

"We want to understand where and how adaptation is happening, how much is still in the planning phase and what is being implemented on the ground."

For more information and to participate in the survey go to the [National Environmental Science Program website](#).

Wetlands Run Around

Article by Brian Lea, Birchip Landcare

The Marbled Marshwort (*Nymhoides spinulosperma*) is an endangered species under the Victorian *Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act 1988*.

This water plant is being grown in Neil and Sue Davis' environmental water dam, south of Birchip. Neil and Sue have set up a small pond in their back yard and have

propagated this plant to be further introduced into other dams with environmental water.



Marbled marshwort (*Nymhoides spinulosperma*). Image: provided by Brian Lea.

On Wednesday 2 August, a small group led by Heremaia Titoko, North Central CMA Environmental Water Officer, met out at Neil and Sue Davis' dam. They discussed the planting of marbled marshwort into other water bodies where environmental water is delivered such as Jesse Swamp and Creswick Swamp in the North Central CMA region.

From the Davis' dam the group moved onto Jesse Swamp where the group enjoyed a picnic lunch, birdwatching and trying to identify the vast number of different species of water birds with binoculars, telescopes, cameras and phones. This is one swamp where the marbled marshwort will be planted when the water drops back to its usual level.

Then onto Creswick Swamp where once again the marbled marshwort will be planted.

As an Environmental Water Officer Heremaia develops a Seasonal Watering Proposal each year, which is a review of the last watering year and what she hopes to do in the next watering year. Heremaia considers the environmental water allocation and seeks input from community groups, Traditional Owners, and partner agencies (e.g. Parks Victoria and the Department of

Energy, Environment, and Climate Action) when developing the proposal.

The VEWH (Victorian Environmental Water Holder), holds the water entitlements for the environment for the whole state and, based on recommendations within Seasonal Watering Proposals, writes up a Seasonal Watering Plan for systems across Victoria to achieve ecological objectives.

The Seasonal Watering Plan for the western region covers the Wimmera-Mallee Wetlands in the North Central, Wimmera and Mallee CMA regions as well as the Wimmera System and the Glenelg system.

The North Central CMA manages seven wetlands on the pipe system: Jesse Swamp, Davis Dam, Creswick Swamp, Jeffcott Swamp, Falla Dam, Chirrup Swamp and Corack Lake.



Brian Lea and Helen Barber (Birchip Landcare), Anne Hughes, Carol Campbell, Heremaia Titoko (North Central CMA), Prue McAllister (Buloke and Northern Grampians Landcare Network). Image: provided by Brian Lea

Towards a Healthy Little Coliban River

Article by Tylden Landcare Group

A Healthy Coliban Catchment and Tylden School.

Tylden Primary School senior and prep students' recently helped improve the health of the Coliban River catchment. This part of the project is focused on growing indigenous plants for revegetation along the Little Coliban River during 2023. The Healthy Coliban Catchment rehabilitation program is supported by the North Central CMA, Coliban Water and the Victorian Government's Landcare Program.

With the help of school staff and Tylden Landcare Group, children from the school spent time “pricking out” small plants from seedling trays and placing them into forestry tubes. The plants will be kept in the tubes to establish before being planted along the river.

Tylden Primary School students have played a role in Landcare projects over the years and these plants will be planted along the Little Coliban River. Plants include eucalypts, acacias, callistemons, leptospermums and bulbines.



Thomas, Ms Allira Dickens, Liv and Quincy with Abbie and Cooper of Tylden Primary School propagating seedlings for the Little Coliban River. Image: provided by Tylden Landcare

School Captains Thomas and Quincy said “Seed has been collected from local indigenous plants because these are most suited to local conditions. Native vegetation offers food and homes for native animals, prevents soil erosion and keeps our air clean. Some of these plants may even be kept for sale at the School Fair next year so there are lots of good things about growing native plants!”

Tylden Landcare is working with landholders along the Little Coliban River and the North Central CMA to protect and rehabilitate the Coliban catchment area to ensure a healthy water supply for farms and all users of the Coliban water storage system. The Little Coliban is a tributary of the Coliban River and contributes water to the Upper Coliban Reservoir. A clean, healthy catchment ensures clean, healthy water for the future.

Along with Landcare, school staff assisted students on the day and said, “The senior students did a great job of passing on their plant propagation skills to the younger students!”

Landcare Week stall 2023

Article by Hadley Cole, Connecting Country Landcare Facilitator

Free plants in honour of Maurie Dynon.

In celebration of Landcare Week, Connecting Country, with support from their Landcare Steering Group, held a stall out the front of Castlemaine IGA on Thursday 10 August, which was well received by the wider community. As an ode to the late Landcare legend Maurie Dynon from Guildford Upper Loddon Landcare Group, we gave out free native plants from Newstead Natives to passers-by. Shoppers were thrilled to receive a free plant to take home and care for, and many were curious about our local Landcare groups and how to get involved.

We hope Maurie would be proud of our efforts to get more locally native plants into the landscape and peoples’ gardens. The theme for this year’s Landcare week; Be Inspired, be Empowered, be a Landcarer, epitomises Maurie’s dedication to Landcare across the Mount Alexander/ Leanganook region. The restoration works across the region spearheaded by Maurie’s determination, will be forever in place and contribute to the long-term protection of our local biodiversity.



Mount Alexander Region Landcare Steering Group members at the Landcare Week stall 2023.

National Tree Day along the Campaspe River

Article by Liz Leigh, Campaspe River & Land Management Group Secretary

Conservation Community - working together.

The Campaspe River and Land Management group hosted a community planting day on the banks of the Campaspe River in Kyneton as part of National Tree Day and the Victorian Government's Landcare program together with the North Central CMA. National Tree Day has grown into Australia's largest community tree planting and nature care event. It's a call to action for all Australians to get their hands dirty and give back to the community.

It was a call answered by around thirty volunteers and a range of indigenous trees, shrubs and grasses were planted to augment an area that has been impacted by vigorous weed growth.

Prior to weed control, flood litter washed downstream in last year's October floods was removed by the group taking care to leave natural litter like logs and branches but removing glass and plastic, then weed control could start, and finally parts of the planting area was brushcut to delineate the planting area. Into this went the indigenous plants, all grown from locally collected seed. The primary objective of restoration works is to improve the quality and extent of native vegetation along the Campaspe River.

Liz Leigh from the CR&LMG said "Weed invasion has direct impacts on the water quality of the river and one of the ways to mitigate this impact is to plant with indigenous trees, shrubs and grasses. Once established this vegetation will create a filter zone between the Campaspe and its surrounding catchment area. The plantings will provide many ecosystem services including the filtering of nutrients and also will control streambank erosion."

Among the indigenous plantings along the elevated parts of the Campaspe was *dianella admixta* or flax lilly. This is a tussock grass that can grow to around one metre and is a useful plant for erosion control. Flax lilly provides habitat for reptiles and its fruit, a purple berry attracts grey shrike-thrush, a local songbird often considered the most beautiful in Australia!

"By linking people to environmental projects along our rivers we are increasing opportunities for all Australians to be educated in the importance of our natural

environment" added Liz. "Participation in a landscape and river rehabilitation program such as this local one will help us reduce our ecological footprints to more sustainable levels"

The CR&LMG aims to encourage people to get out, get about and explore, discover and contribute to environmental rehabilitation projects.



Liz, Darcy and Nat with a flax lilly for local reptiles and birds along the Campaspe River. Image: provided by Campaspe River and Land Management group



WaterWatch Victoria

Victorian WaterWatch and EstuaryWatch coordinator catchup and workshop

State WaterWatch and EstuaryWatch coordinators get together each year to share experiences, plan and continue to inspire each other.

August 11 & 12 saw participating regions come together at CERES in Brunswick. Staff from North Central CMA, Mallee CMA, Corangamite CMA, West Gippsland CMA, Glenelg Hopkins CMA, Manningham City Council, Melbourne Water and the Merri Creek Management Committee were all in attendance.

A key session of the workshop was learning how to better analyse water quality data, based on the relatively new [EPA Environmental Reference Standards \(ERS\)](#).

The ERS defines environmental values that we want to achieve and maintain, provides indicators and objectives, and a way to assess those values at varying locations throughout Victoria. It's important that we keep up to date with new science as it becomes available and adjust our understanding and interpretation of data. We have started using these new standards within our most recent suite of annual snapshot reports, so this was a really relevant workshop. We were able to learn more and also share our recent experience with other coordinators from across the state.

We also talked about ways to improve our annual Quality Assurance Quality Control (QAQC) program, to make it more cost effective and accessible to everyone. This is an important aspect of WaterWatch; to ensure we have confidence in the quality of data that is being collected by our network of volunteers. Watch this space, more information coming soon for our WaterWatch volunteers.

We also had a facilitated workshop to develop a new strategic plan for the next three years of WaterWatch. Five outcome areas were identified: Water is safer,

native plants and animals thrive, data is trusted, useful and used, land use practices are benign, and flows are optimal. The work of WaterWatch volunteers contributes to each of these outcomes, while the role of WaterWatch staff is to create an environment in which volunteers can safely perform meaningful work and can see that their efforts are making tangible contributions to those outcome areas. We will share the new plan when it is completed and becomes available.



Statewide WaterWatch & EstuaryWatch coordinator team.

And welcome...

...to two of our newest volunteers, Peter and Juan!

Peter and Juan have wasted no time and have already started monitoring sites around Carapooee. Great to have you both on board!



Peter and Juan doing their WaterWatch induction.

Britt Gregory

Project Officer – WaterWatch & Citizen Science Programs
North Central CMA

Phone: 03 5440 1843

Email: britt.gregory@nccma.vic.gov.au



COMMUNITY
PARTNERSHIP
PROGRAM

Celebrating success and planning new ways to connect with a broader audience

The River Detectives statewide mid-year report has been released and is a great read!

More than one hundred schools across the state have been engaged in River Detectives learning this year.

Take a look at the [mid-year report](#) on the North Central CMA website to hear about their highlights from Terms 1 and 2.

River Detectives waterbug sampling workshops open to all.

Waterbug sampling is one of the most engaging, enjoyable, educational activities in our program. Students of all ages love it, and teachers can see how well it links to the science curriculum and beyond!

Diving into the world of waterbugs connects students intimately with waterway and catchment health concepts and is doable by River Detective and non-River Detective schools with easily accessible equipment.

The following sessions are open to school staff, parent volunteers and passionate community / Landcare members:

Monday 4 September 4:15pm to 5:45pm, Epsom PS

Wednesday 6 September 4:15pm to 5:45pm, St Joseph's PS Kerang

Tuesday 12 September 4:15pm to 5:45pm, Carlsruhe Annexe of Woodend PS

Come along to:

- Find out what equipment is needed for waterbug sampling and where to get it.
- Learn how to run a waterbug session.
- Experience waterbug sampling and enhance your knowledge and ID skills.
- Tap into useful resources.

No obligation to sign up to River Detectives.

RSVP essential to riverdetectives@nccma.vic.gov.au

Come and try session at the National Water Week event.

Have you ever wanted to give River Detectives activities a try before making a commitment? Either as a teacher, a passionate parent looking to persuade your school to take part or as a Landcarer curious about the program that could help you connect better with your local school.

Come along to the National Water Week event, Bendigo Library, Saturday 21 October, 10am to 1pm. Try your hand at water quality testing and waterbug sampling and check out the FREE equipment and support you can receive when you take part in the River Detectives program.

Nicole Howie
River Detectives Project Officer
North Central CMA
Phone: 0413 974 074
Email: nicole.howie@nccma.vic.gov.au



Water Storages Update

Region	Water Storage	% full	% full same time 2022
Murray Storages	Dartmouth Dam	96.84	97.84
	Hume Dam	97.27	96.17
	Reedy/Middle Lk	93.45	90.72
	Kangaroo Lake	90.34	95.14
	Kow Swamp	72.77	74.39
	Lake Boga	85.68	79.31
	Lake Charm	96.17	93.58
Loddon Storages	Cairn Curran Res	98.99	62.77
	Tullaroop Res	100.84	66.62
	Laanecoorie Res	97.75	57.44
Bullarook Storages	Newlyn Res	100.88	102.12
	Hepburns Lagoon	102.38	97.99
Goulburn Storages	Lake Eildon	95.78	87.26
	Waranga Basin	97.05	84.76
Campaspe	Lake Eppalock	100.48	51.98
Coliban Water Storages	Upper Coliban Res	100.5	3.6
	Lauriston Res	97	14
	Malmsbury Res	102.3	41.6

National Bilby Day	12 Sep
National Organic Week	20-26 Sep
World Rivers Day	26 Sep
October	
Australian Wildlife Week	4-8 Oct
World Habitat Day	4 Oct
World Migratory Bird Day	9 Oct
Gone Fishing Day	17 Oct
National Bird Week	18-24 Oct
Aussie Backyard Bird Count	18-24 Oct
National Water Week	18-24 Oct
National Ride 2 Work Day	20 Oct
Enviroweek	20-26 Oct
Wombat Day	22 Oct
November	
National Recycling Week	6-12 Nov
World Science Day for Peace and Development	10 Nov
Pollinator Week	13-19 Nov
World Fisheries Day	21 Nov

Upcoming Events and Special Days

September	
National Biodiversity Month	1-30 Sep
National Wattle Day	1 Sep
National Threatened Species Day	7 Sep
Bushcare's Major Day Out	11 Sep

Sustainable Ag Snippet...

Victorian Carbon Farming Program

The Victorian Carbon Farming Program is rolling out in the region.

The \$15.3 million Victorian Carbon Farming Program (VCFP) provides an opportunity for private landholders to reduce emissions and build resilience to a changing climate. This program will support private landholders to:

- plant woodlot, agroforestry, and shelterbelt trees
- leverage opportunities available from timber, carbon, or environmental markets
- realise on-farm co-benefits such as shade and shelter for stock, biodiversity values or improved farm aesthetics.

The program is being run as a \$3 million pilot for the first 18 months in the North Central Catchment Management Authority (CMA) region. Landowners in the North Central CMA region are currently able to access support from a Registered Project Advisor and partner with them to apply for grants to plant trees on their properties.

More information about the program and how you can be involved can be found on their website [Victorian Carbon Farming Program | Agriculture and climate change | Climate and weather | Agriculture Victoria](#)

The above information was taken from the Agriculture Victoria website.

Australia-wide survey to find gaps in soil knowledge is now open

Results from the survey – which is open to all those interested in the future of soils, from agriculture to natural resource management – will help inform the design and delivery of targeted soil interventions to address priorities under the National Soil Strategy.

Dr Peter Fisher, Victoria Soil Co-ordinator with the Victoria Drought Resilience Adoption & Innovation Hub, said, “Everyone knows the importance of soils in sustaining healthy food production and for protecting the environment and biodiversity.

“But the pressure to improve soil health – while aiming for net zero emissions to minimise impacts on climate change – requires developing and adopting better soil-management practices.

“For this reason, the Regional Soil Co-ordinators, who are based across the country at each of the eight Drought and Innovation Hubs, are asking people involved in soil management to complete a new survey on the soil issues, gaps and opportunities in their region.”

Dr Fisher is keen to see a strong representation in the nation-wide survey of Victorian soil issues and knowledge gaps, as well as RD&E opportunities for improved soil management.

“Soil types, farming systems and soil management issues in Victoria are quite varied, but Victoria is Australia’s largest food and fibre exporter by value, and getting a good Victorian response to the survey is very important.”

He said the survey is not just for the agricultural sector, but also covers wider natural resource management of soils, so everyone interested in the future of soils is encouraged to participate in the survey.

The [survey can be accessed here](#) or via the QR code below with your smartphone.



The above information was taken from the Victorian Drought and Innovation Hub website.

Darren Bain
Regional Agriculture Landcare Facilitator
Ph: 5440 1893
M: 0419 560 348
E: darren.bain@nccma.vic.gov.au

Courses & Resources...

Soil carbon explained in new eLearning module

Agriculture Victoria



Agriculture Victoria has developed a soil carbon eLearning module that provides a great introduction for anyone seeking to understand soil carbon, its role and function in agriculture.

Agriculture Victoria Climate Change Service Development Officer, Heather Field, said over recent decades farmers have been actively working towards conserving and increasing soil carbon and reducing soil carbon losses by improved farm management practices.

'Soil carbon is critical for soil health, improving productivity, profitability and resilience. While soil carbon is easy to lose, and challenging to increase, it's important to remember that maintaining your soil carbon levels while producing food and fibre is a great outcome,' Ms Field said.

'This easily accessible soil carbon eLearning module will help participants to have a deeper knowledge and tenable sound decisions for their operation.'

The introduction to soil carbon eLearn delves into:

- soil health benefits of soil carbon
- difference between soil carbon and soil organic matter
- influence of soil type, climate and land management on soil carbon stocks
- impacts of agriculture practices on soil carbon
- where to go for further information and resources.

'If you would like to learn about the importance of soil carbon, this is a great resource,' she said.

The eLearn '*Introduction to soil carbon*' is available now by clicking [here](#).

Leadership in Rabbit Control Course 2023 – applications now open

Victorian Rabbit Action Network

When is the Course?

Arrive: Wednesday 25 October 2023 at 12:00pm.
Depart: Friday 27 October 2023 at 2:00 pm

Where is it held?

Cowes, Phillip Island, Victoria. Our classroom sessions will be conducted in the field at various locations across Phillip Island and classroom sessions will be held at the Phillip Island Nature Parks - Penguin Parade facilities. You will be staying overnight in accommodation located at Cowes.

What is the 'Leadership in Rabbit Control Course'?

The Victorian Rabbit Action Network 'Leadership in Rabbit Control Course' 2023 is open to all Victorians currently involved in the management of rabbits on private or public land.

The Leadership in Rabbit Control Course is a mentor course that includes both classroom and practical field-based training. Following the training, participants will be offered the opportunity to form a group or 'Learning Network' who can meet, share ideas and discuss rabbit management to continue their learning.

For more information and to apply, head to the [Victorian Rabbit Action Network website](#).

Events...

Volunteering Loddon Mallee (VLM) Community of Practice

What does a great induction / onboarding program look like?

The VLM Community of Practice meetings take place on the first Monday of each month at 2pm. These networking sessions will consist of a short presentation on a prepared topic, and an opportunity for people to meet and share with other people who also manage volunteers. For more information and other events check out the [Bendigo Volunteer Resource Centre website](#).

When: Monday 4 September, 2.00-3.30pm

Where: Zoom

Cost: Free

RSVP: Email vlm@bgovolunteers.org.au

Landcare Farming Webinar Series

All you need to know about Farm-scale Natural Capital Accounting.

The Landcare Farming Webinar Series supports farmers, graziers and landholders from across Australia with expert advice to improve agricultural and ecological outcomes on their properties.

Speakers include Dr Jim Radford (La Trobe University), Danny O'Brien (Integrated Futures) and Angela Hawdon (Bush Heritage Australia).

When: Thursday 7 September, 11am

Where: Online

Cost: Free

For more information and to register check out the website [here](#). Previous webinars in the series can also be watched on the Landcare Farming [website](#).

Riparian Restoration Field Day

What can we do to support platypus, blackfish, and other threatened species which depend on our waterways?

You are invited to the North Central CMA's Riparian Restoration Field Day to find out.

The field day is part of the Tullaroop Catchment Restoration Project and is an opportunity for community members to hear first-hand from volunteers and experts about riparian restoration.

The word 'riparian' refers to the area of land alongside a waterway. Riparian land is valuable in many ways, including as habitat and drought refuges for wildlife. Attendees will learn about actions they can take to help rehabilitate creeks, rivers, and other waterways, and the benefits to people and the environment.

The day will feature a Welcome to Country, site tour, platypus expert guest speaker from EnviroDNA, hands-on waterbug activity, afternoon tea, and information on take-home actions for individuals and Landcare groups.

Contact asha.bannon@nccma.vic.gov.au for further information.

This event is organised by North Central CMA with funding through the Victorian Government's 2021-24 Waterway Health program.

When: Saturday 9 September 2023, 1:30pm to 4:30 pm

Where: Smeaton (property address will be provided upon registration)

What to bring: Sturdy footwear or gumboots, water bottle and warm clothes. Afternoon tea provided.

Cost: Free

Register: [Click here to register](#) by Monday 4 September 2023

Trust For Nature - John Paul Memorial Lecture 2023

Big restoration – the new movement of hope for nature.

The UN has declared that we're in the decade of restoration. But how do we restore ecosystems in ways that give us the biggest bang for our buck?

Biolinks are big restoration projects that aim to restore habitat and link ecosystems across entire landscapes.

In this webinar, we'll bring you stories from three exciting biolink projects that are linking and restoring landscapes at inspirational scales.

Join us to find out what gains are made when you link bush patches, and link organisations and people. The whole might just be greater than the sum of the parts.

When: Thursday 14 September, 7.00-8.30pm

Where: Online

Cost: Free

Register: [Click here to register](#).

Cruise the Creek

A free, family-friendly event to rediscover, enjoy, learn about and help Bendigo Creek.

Northern Bendigo Landcare group is turning 15 and inviting everyone to help them celebrate at a 'Cruise the Creek' event on Sunday 17 September, between 10am and 2pm.

The event will begin at 10am with a Smoking Ceremony and Welcome to Country but participants can come along any time during the event to walk/cycle the Huntly Streamside Reserve and stop off at activities of interest. In 'choose your own adventure' style there will be a variety of activities on offer, with something for everyone including:

- Seed ball making
- Bird treasure hunt
- History of Huntly Streamside Reserve
- Nestbox peeking
- Ask a Ranger with Parks Victoria
- Water Quality testing
- Planting for small birds
- Waterbug sampling
- Indian Myna trapping talk
- Outdoor activities (kite flying, frisbee, etc)

Kids can get their event passport stamped along the way and gather clues to solve the Bendigo Creek Quiz.

Participants can complete the full route or part thereof at their leisure on the gravel reserve track suitable for walking and cycling. Use of vehicles discouraged for participant safety but transport available for those who need it.

Bendigo Creek habitat restoration has been NBLG's major on-ground project over the past 15 years and they look forward to sharing it with the community.

Parking available at the Huntly Streamside Reserve picnic area on Leans Rd Huntly, toilets provided enroute, free BBQ and refreshment station with birthday cupcakes!

When: Sunday 17 September 2023, 10am-2pm

Where: Huntly Streamside Reserve – parking available at picnic area on Leans Rd, Huntly.

Cost: Free

RSVP: Register on [Eventbrite here](#).

Galngga Festival

The Buloke and Northern Grampians Landcare Network has been quietly growing something, and we can't keep it in any longer!

We proudly present Galngga Festival, our inaugural festival in celebration of the environment and connecting to nature.

The word "Galngga" was gifted to us from Dja Dja Wurrung language meaning "Celebrate Country", and we warmly invite everyone to celebrate with us over the course of this 4-week long festival. With events each day, we have a range of activities hosted all over the network that ask participants to engage with their natural environment.

From yoga and tai-chi in the bush, to painting and poetry, native animals and biodiversity, to music and cultural events.

We have guest speakers, Citizen Science, talks with authors, as well as bike rides, bush-walks, children's activities, fun runs, Jr Landcare, and so much more! There's something for everyone.

Find the event schedule and registrations on Eventbrite here: [Buloke and Northern Grampians Landcare Network Events | Eventbrite](#)

Be sure to follow us on Facebook 'Galngga Festival' for all the details - [Galngga Festival | Saint Arnaud VIC | Facebook](#)

Galngga Festival kicks off on Saturday September 23 with the opening of the Harmony Garden by Aunty Marilynne from Djaara and guest speaker Sophie Thomson from Gardening Australia, at the St Arnaud Raillery hub. Tickets available through [Eventbrite.com](#) (search Galngga Festival).

The Galngga Festival runs from September 23 to October 22 2023.

Save the date - Victorian Biodiversity Conference

7-9 February 2024

The Victorian Biodiversity Conference (VicBioCon) is an annual scientific conference focused on highlighting biodiversity-related research and management projects based in the state of Victoria, Australia. The conference is held over three days towards the beginning of each year and is organised by a dedicated team of post-graduate students and professionals from a number of Victorian universities and organisations.

The 8th annual conference will be held at the Burwood Campus of Deakin University on 7-9 February 2024.

To stay up to date with all the news about VicBioCon24, join their [mailing list](#).



Funding opportunities...

By the North Central CMA Business Development Team

This month, the North Central CMA Business Development team bring you fifteen new grants to fund biodiversity, climate resilience and community building projects. Some of these are region specific.

Quick tip: Grant writing can be much easier and quicker than it used to be. If you find grant submissions difficult, have any doubts or questions, please call Jason from the business development team on 03 5440 1805 or email the team at bdp@nccma.vic.gov.au

Community Enterprise Foundation - Community Bank Inglewood & District Grants Program, close 31/12/2023

Avoca, Maryborough & St Arnaud Community Grant Program - total of \$250,000 available, close 16/09/2023

Damien Greer Lawyers - Community Grants \$2,500, close 31/12/2023

ETREA Foundation - Capacity building grants (DGR), \$2,000 - \$10,000, close 30/09/2023

Greater Bendigo City Council - Small grants, \$2,000, close 30/06/2024

Greater Bendigo City Council - Community Group Essentials grants, \$2,000, close 30/06/2024

Macedon Ranges Shire Council - Small Project Grants, \$3,000, close 30/06/2024

Macedon Ranges Shire Council - Environment Group Support Grants, \$5,000, close 27/08/2023

Murray River Council (MRC) - Quick Response Grants, \$2,500, close 07/06/2024

Murray River Council (MRC) - Community Grants, \$3,000, close 15/09/2023

Northern Grampians Shire Council – Community Events Grants Program, \$3,000, close 30/06/2024

Northern Grampians Shire Council – Minor Grants, \$1,000, close 30/06/2024

The Sidney Myer Fund, Australian Neighbourhood Houses & Centres Association (ANHCA) – Supporting Stronger Communities Grants, \$10,000, open 21/08/2023, close 28/09/2023

Wettenhall Environment Trust – Small Environment Grants, \$10,000, open 01/10/2022 – ongoing.