

North Central chat

DECEMBER 2012

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

A message from the Regional Landcare Coordinator

Hi everyone,

The end of the year is almost here and this will be the last edition of North Central chat for 2012. I would like to thank you all for making this another great year. It has been a pleasure working with you!

Are you familiar with social media, do you know what it is? The term 'social media' refers to the way people interact whereby they create, share, exchange and comment amongst themselves in virtual, web-based communities and networks. This month, the North Central Catchment Management Authority (CMA) commenced its social media presence and went live on Facebook and Twitter. What does this mean for you? Well if you dabble in social media then it is another means of staying up-to-date with what the North Central CMA is doing. If you are a Facebook user you can 'like' the North Central CMA page and comment on 'posts' as they happen. If you are a Tweeter you can follow us on Twitter @North Central CMA and re-tweet or comment on updates as they happen.

Some of you may have heard that the Spring 2012 edition of Catchment Care was the last edition of the unique North Central Waterwatch newsletter. Don't despair though as next year Waterwatch will be contributing to North Central chat. Both Landcare and Waterwatch are community programs, with many volunteers participating in both programs, so it makes perfect sense that we join forces to produce an even better newsletter - win, win! Next year you will see more articles on waterway health and get to read about some of the amazing volunteers who monitor our waterways who will tell their stories in the North Central chat.

Hopefully this will be the last time I have to say this... well for 2012 at least... but for the groups with outstanding final Victorian Landcare Grant

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reports, and you know who you are, please make sure you submit them to me ASAP.

Once again thanks for a great 2012. I will be back to you with the January edition of the newsletter in 2013. Please make sure you keep sending through your articles and photos over the holiday period.

Lastly, MERRY CHRISTMAS! I hope you all have a lovely time over the break with family, friends and loved ones. Wishing you all the best for a happy and safe New Year and I look forward to seeing you all in 2013.

Take care,

Jodie Odgers

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North Central Catchment Management Authority
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News...

National Biodiversity Investment Prospectus launched

Environment Minister, Tony Burke, has released the Gillard Government’s first national biodiversity investment prospectus: *One Land – Many Stories: Prospectus of Investment 2013-14*.

The prospectus sets out the framework for Australian Government investment in biodiversity conservation under programs within the Land Sector Package and the sustainable environment stream of Caring for our Country.

It provides the community with information in one document on where the government will focus investments in 2013-14 in working with the community to deliver real outcomes for the environment.

In launching the prospectus Mr Burke said, “My vision for biodiversity investment is one in which we take up the opportunities we have right now for conservation and natural resource management in a changing climate and one which values the connection of people to the environments they inhabit.

“Importantly, Australia’s urban rivers, coastal and marine environments provide essential ecosystem services that support local communities and their economies. To ensure the ongoing wellbeing of these communities, it is important that our urban and coastal waterways are protected.

“Human activities have significant impacts on coastal and urban environments, including on the health of rivers and adjoining urban waterways and estuaries.

“Our investment will target urban waterways affected by runoff and discharges from areas in and around capital cities and high growth population centres in the coastal zone.

“We want to start working to make sure our urban rivers look like rivers not drains.

“You can’t look after the oceans without caring for the rivers that flow into them.”

Story continued on page 3.

Weed of the month...

Weeds Identification Guide - North Central Victoria.

Late spring and summer is the time to control hawthorn. Have you spotted it before?

Shrub

HAWTHORN

Crataegus monogyna

Description: An erect shrub to 6 m tall, reproducing by seed.

Flowers: White, cream or pink, from 8–13 mm diameter, in flat topped clusters at end of small branches. Strongly scented, occurring in spring.

Leaves: Green. Variable from oval to triangular. Divided into lobes and generally coarsely serrated.

Stems: Erect, much branched with many small branches ending in stout spines. Bark rough at base and smoother towards the top.

Fruit: Clusters of deep red berries, 8 mm in diameter.

Note: Provides harbour for pest animals and is known to be a reservoir for Fire Blight.

Restricted Weed Perennial

CONTROL OPTIONS

VECTOR OF SPREAD

J F M A M J J A S O N D



The government earlier this year committed \$2.2 billion for a second five years of Caring for our Country, commencing on 1 July 2013. The release of the prospectus follows a significant period of consultation with the community and stakeholders to inform the design of the second phase of the natural resource management initiative.

From July 2013, Caring for our Country will be delivered through two specific streams – one dedicated to sustainable environment and the other to sustainable agriculture.

Separate but complementary streams will allow focussed delivery of our priorities and ensure effective integration with the policies and programs in the government's broader sustainability and conservation agendas.

The prospectus also sets out the context for future investment under the Biodiversity Fund, the Regional Natural Resource Management Planning for Climate Change Fund, and the Indigenous Carbon Farming Fund.

In 2011 the Australian Government established the Land Sector Package as part of *Australia's Clean Energy Future plan* and is investing up to \$1.7 billion over six years to reward landholders who reduce pollution and store carbon through plantings.

The government will continue to roll out the Land Sector Package over the next four years through an integrated set of landscape-scale investments that recognise the opportunities for linking carbon benefits with other biodiversity conservation benefits.

More information on the prospectus is available at www.environment.gov.au/prospectus.

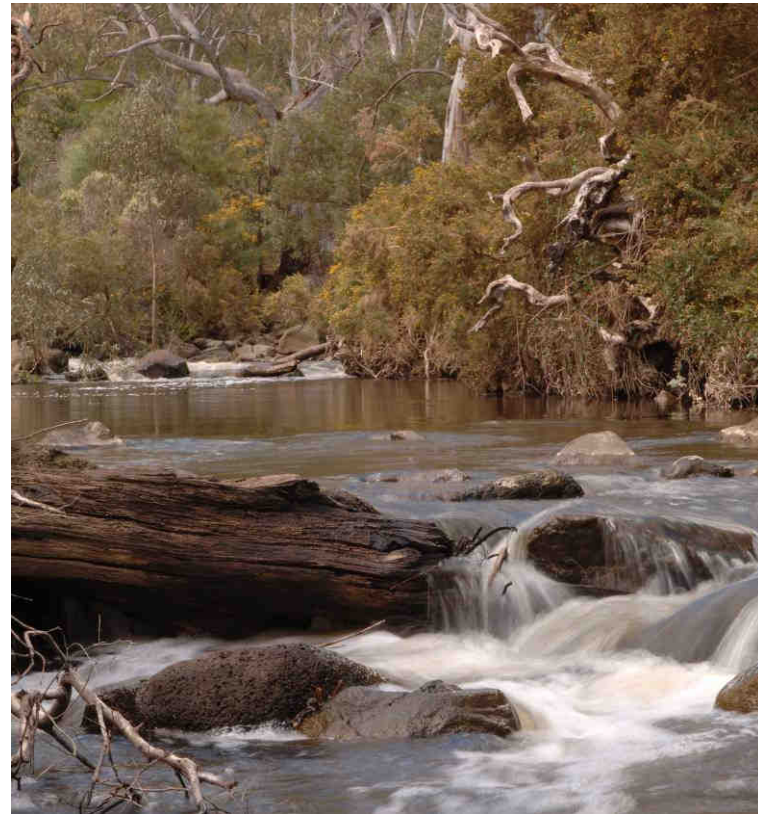
Caring for the Campaspe River

The Campaspe River will be the focus of a new large-scale project aiming to improve the health of 400 hectares of riparian vegetation. The North Central Catchment Management Authority (CMA) will implement this four-year project with funding from the Victorian Government's Securing Priority Waterways program.

Ms Emer Campbell, North Central CMA Executive Manager, said the Caring for the Campaspe River project is a first for the river and will focus on its entire length from the headwaters near Ashbourne to the Murray River at Echuca.

“The river contains several threatened vegetation communities and aquatic life. It provides habitat for many terrestrial species, such as the threatened Swift Parrot and Squirrel Gilder. It is important to improve the condition of riparian vegetation so that this leads to improvements in the aquatic and riparian ecosystem health.”

Ms Campbell said the first stage is to raise awareness of the project and gain community support. “We are currently seeking membership from the community, Registered Aboriginal Parties and a range of agency stakeholders to form a Project Reference Group. This group will play an important role in guiding the on-ground works priorities and community engagement activities of the project.”



The Campaspe River provides fantastic recreational opportunities for the community and supports horticultural and agricultural activities throughout its catchment. Ms Campbell added “The Campaspe River also provides water to a number of townships (domestic and stock) and is a major carrier of irrigation and environmental water from Lake Eppalock.”

On-ground works are expected to commence in July 2013 following further engagement of

Campaspe River landholders and community groups.

Further information can be found at www.nccma.vic.gov.au or by contacting the North Central CMA on (03) 5448 7124.

Assault on Pale Yellow Water Lily to benefit Gunbower Creek

The North Central CMA, in partnership with Goulburn-Murray Water, is currently undertaking works to control the Pale Yellow Water Lily (*Nymphaea sp*) on Gunbower Creek and associated lagoons.

An introduced species, which is characterised by its heavy green foliage and pale yellow flowers, causes problems by blocking waterways and impacting on irrigation and recreational use. It rapidly colonizes shallow, nutrient-rich waters resulting in dense infestations that restrict water movement and contribute to siltation of the creek.

According to local residents and Trent Gibson, North Central CMA's project manager, infestations of the plant have increased dramatically over the past few years in the creek. "Several local groups, including the Gunbower Creek Weed Reference Group, have raised this as being one of the local residents' major concerns.

"Despite the plant being present in Gunbower Creek for over 20 years, we have noticed increasing infestations. Once established, this invasive weed can be difficult to control. We suspect the increased nutrient levels, water temperatures and low irrigation draw down due to drought impacts are contributing factors to the proliferation of the Pale Yellow Water Lily."

Mr Gibson said treatment methods would follow recommendations from recent trials, including the use of aquatic approved glyphosate and spraying during the active growth period of November-April, with a second treatment in March.

"We intend to control the infestations, between the National Channel off-take and then downstream to the Cohuna Weir, by gradually treating strips along the centre of the waterways, first and pushing outwards towards the shoreline. Following herbicide application the decaying plant matter will be carefully monitored by installing dissolved oxygen probes to reduce the risk of a blackwater event. Unfortunately it will require several years of repeated treatment, with

significant monitoring and evaluation vital to prevent the re-establishment of infestations."



Funding for this year's work is provided by the Australian Government through the *Enhancing the values of the Gunbower Ramsar site* project. "A funding bid to continue work beyond June 2013 is currently being prepared," concluded Mr Gibson.

To find out more about the program visit www.nccma.vic.gov.au

Wildlife Health Surveillance Victoria

The Faculty of Veterinary Science at the University of Melbourne investigate reports of sick and dead wildlife from free-ranging populations in Victoria to understand baseline wildlife health and detect changes. This is important because wildlife health can affect biodiversity conservation and ecosystem health, and can interact with biosecurity and the health of domestic animals and people.

Platypus - dead platypus are examined to determine the cause of death and collect samples for toxicological tests.

Kangaroos and Wallabies - staff at the University of Melbourne investigate reports of incoordinated, wobbly or apparently blind macropods. Kangaroo blindness virus is spread by midges. Phalaris staggers from pasture, and toxoplasmosis (from cat faeces) are other possible causes of incoordination and death. Eye and nasal discharge, sneezing and tail twitching have also been reported. If you see kangaroos or wallabies with any of these signs of disease, please contact the University.



Botulism in wetlands - if you see dead, weak, or partially paralysed water birds over summer, contact the faculty. These deaths could be due to botulinum toxin, produced by bacteria that can persist in the environment.

Frog deaths have been reported after rain, possibly due to chemical toxicity. Chytrid fungus infections are also important causes of frog deaths and population declines. The faculty can test for these.

Parrots, cockatoos and lorikeets can have beak and feather disease caused by circovirus. More information is needed about bird species infected, the distribution and virus strains.



Samples can be transported overnight for investigation.

Please contact Pam Whitely to report sick and dead wildlife from free-ranging populations of mammals, birds, reptiles and amphibians in Victoria.

Phone: 03 9731 2000

Mobile: 0400 119 301

Email: pamw@unimelb.edu.au

More information is available on the Faculty of Veterinary Science webpage: www.vet.unimelb.edu.au/wildlifehealthsurveillance/vic/index.html

Department of Primary Industries finds significant serrated tussock infestation in the Redesdale area

Article featured in Tussock Times, December 2012

Surveillance efforts by the Department of Primary Industries (DPI) in north central Victoria have located a large Serrated Tussock infestation.

The scattered satellite infestation over 80 hectares in the Redesdale area is a significant find by DPI staff.

Serrated Tussock is not widespread throughout north central Victoria and the department is already actively managing two further properties with significant infestations in the area where the new infestation is located, as well as five smaller infestations on roadsides and private property.

The department is encouraging landowners in the Redesdale area to be vigilant and report any suspected infestations of this declared noxious weed.

The department will continue to work with the landowners in this area to ensure Serrated Tussock is controlled.

Further surveillance efforts are planned for the properties surrounding the newly detected infestation.

More information on Serrated Tussock can be found on the Victorian Serrated Tussock Working Party website: www.serratedtussock.com

or at DPI online: www.dpi.vic.gov.au

or by contacting DPI on 136 186.

Australia's first Landcare number plates ready to drive away

From the Minister for Environment and Climate Change

Victorians can now show their support for Landcare by choosing a special Landcare number plate for their vehicle.

Minister for Environment and Climate Change Ryan Smith recently launched the nation's first Landcare number plates at Waratah Bay in South Gippsland.



“Driving around with Landcare number plates is a great way for people to fly the flag for this iconic grassroots movement,” Mr Smith said.

Victoria is the first state to have special interest number plates dedicated to Landcare thanks to the efforts of the South Gippsland Landcare Network.

The number plates have a distinctive Landcare look with green lettering and Landcare’s iconic hands.

“This is an innovative and fun way for Victorians to show their support for Landcare,” Mr Smith said.

Each Landcare number plate has the slogan “Supporting Landcare” and motorists can choose a number between 001-LC and 100-LC, depending on availability.

“Out of Landcare’s thriving community of more than 60,000 members across Victoria, the South Gippsland Landcare Network was the first to come up with this great idea and turn it into a reality,” Mr Smith said.

“It’s this kind of creative thinking, hard work and spirit that has kept Landcare thriving for a quarter of a century and it gives me great confidence that the movement is in good hands.”

Mr Smith congratulated Belinda Brennan, South Gippsland Landcare Network Facilitator, for helping to develop the number plates.

The Coalition Government has provided \$12 million to fund 68 new Landcare facilitators across Victoria to support Landcare groups and networks, build expertise and partnerships, and assist with advice on project development.

The funds raised from the Landcare number plates will assist the South Gippsland Landcare Network to continue their work for the environment and community in protecting remnant vegetation, creating koala habitat and rehabilitating land slips.

Moorlort Wetlands on show

More than 120 people toured the Moorlort Wetlands on Sunday 2 December. Hosted by the North Central CMA, Moorlort Wetlands project manager Nick Layne said it was a great opportunity to showcase why the wetlands are special. “With more than 50 in total, the wetlands support many threatened bird species and endangered native vegetation communities. The aim of the project is to increase the area of Moorlort wetlands managed for conservation by 377 ha by June 2013.”

“The reason one of these wetlands is so amazing is that no one bit of it is the same so each bit caters for different birds.” said Chris Tzaros from Birds Australia, one of the key note speakers who spoke on the day.



Have you observed changes in floodplain plant and animal communities? If so, CSIRO needs your help!

CSIRO is examining how changes to flood regimes in the Murray-Darling Basin have affected floodplain plants and animals.

The Millennium Drought (1997-2009) led to a decline in many floodplain ecosystems in the Murray-Darling Basin. The La Nina climate cycle in 2010 saw widespread flooding throughout the Basin, and recovery in some ecosystems. However, in some areas, these floods have not always resulted in the expected response or recovery.

These two events - long-term drought followed by extensive floods - provide a unique opportunity to better understand how floodplain plants and animals respond to variation in water availability, and which plant and animal communities are most resilient or susceptible to change.

Why your help is needed

Your information will contribute valuable data and information to the collective knowledge about floodplain plants and animals in the Murray-Darling Basin, and enable researchers to find out about changes across a broad geographic scale.

Your participation will help to inform management of floodplains, particularly regarding how we manage change in complex ecosystems.

How you can help

As part of this project, CSIRO is conducting a preliminary survey to collect information on the response and recovery of floodplain plants and animals across a wide range of ecosystems.

The CSIRO will be surveying researchers, managers, landholders and other stakeholders who live and work in the southern Murray-Darling Basin.

This preliminary survey will be followed by more detailed interviews with a subset of participants who would like to be further involved in the project.

About the survey

The survey is being conducted online and only takes about 20 minutes to complete.

Every participant goes into a raffle where 10 food and drink hampers will be given away to randomly selected survey participants who complete the whole survey.

The CSIRO wants you to tell them your observations of how floodplain plants and animals in your region of the Murray-Darling Basin responded to the Millennium Drought and the recent floods, and why you think they responded in this way.

The survey will ask you for location details such as the part of the Murray-Darling Basin that you are in, and where you have seen changes in flora and fauna. The survey's front page explains how to prepare this information before you start the survey.

The survey front page also includes other information including the CSIRO researchers involved, how your information will be used, and ethics clearance.

The survey will be open until Friday 1 March 2013.

Contact Bob Godfree on (02) 6246 4956 or 0459 849 269 for more information.

Researchers involved:

Dr Robert Godfree and Lyndsey Vivian, CSIRO Water for a Healthy Country Flagship (Plant Industry Division)

Dr Heather McGinness, CSIRO Water for a Healthy Country Flagship (Ecosystem Sciences Division)

Links:

Project web page including link to survey - www.csiro.au/science/floodplain-response

About the Millennium Drought - www.environment.gov.au/soe/2011/report/atmosphere/2-1-current-state-climate.html

About the La Nina climate cycle in 2010 - www.bom.gov.au/climate/enso/history/ln-2010-12/

Snaps of the month!

The November newsletter featured the picture below, taken by Max Schlachter, Mount Alexander Region Landcare Facilitator at Connecting Country. During the month we received an email from Martin Hyland who suggested what appears to be a flower is really a chemical reaction/distortion in the unopened leaf axil or leaf bud where a wasps gall has been established (*Hymenoptora sp*) - thanks Martin!





The picture below sent in by David Rose and Elizabeth Hak was taken in bushland near Creswick. The photo is of a Purple Beard-orchid *Calochilus robertsonii*



Keep sending your snaps, we would love to include them in the next edition of the newsletter. Email them to jodie.odgers@nccma.vic.gov.au.

Events

Carbon farming information session

**Are you interested in being paid to farm carbon?
Are you considering alternative incomes on your property?**

The newly re-formed East Loddon Landcare Group is hosting a *free* carbon farming information session in Jarklin early in 2013.

Guest speaker Ben Keogh, Managing Director of Australian Carbon Traders, will discuss the practicalities and realities of carbon farming.

Ben Keogh has a professional background in agriculture, natural resource management and forestry. He has been working in carbon farming since 2004, with extensive experience in the design and implementation of carbon farming projects and schemes.

Topics to be covered at the information session include:

- Creating carbon credits on farm
- Participating in the Carbon Farming Initiative

- Marketing and trading carbon credits.

There will also be plenty of opportunity for questions.

When: Wednesday 30 January 2013

Time: 7.00 pm—9.30 pm (Dinner provided)

Where: Four Posts Hotel, Loddon Valley Hwy, Jarklin, Victoria

Cost: Free event

RSVP: For catering purposes please RSVP to the North Central CMA by 5.00pm Monday 28 January on (03) 5448 7124 or email info@nccma.vic.gov.au.



2013 FTLA Annual Forum and AGM

The FTLA Annual Forum and AGM is on Friday, 22 February 2013 at Level 16, Marland House, 570 Bourke St, Melbourne. As part of the Annual Forum the FTLA holds a number of workshops and if your group or network has a really great project or learning that you would like to share with the rest of the world they would be really interested in hearing from you!

All members are invited and observers are welcome. Also, if there are particular topics or interests you would like to see covered please let them know and they will try to source speakers!

For information contact Suzi Johnson at the FTLA on 03 9207 5527.

Courses and resources

Sustainable Grain Production course

A new or enhanced career in the Australian grains industry beckons students who undertake the University of New England's Sustainable Grains Production Course.

Supported by the Grains Research and Development Corporation (GRDC), the course aims to equip students with the knowledge and skills to fast track their career in the grains industry or advance their farm businesses. This distance education course, studied as part of a Masters, Graduate Certificate or Diploma, enables students to meet and learn from grains industry experts.

Applications for trimester one in 2013 close Sunday 3 February 2013.

Felicity Harrop, from the UNE, says the course offers two areas of study during trimester one. "One area is grains industry systems and this covers topics such as socio-economics of grain production, grain processing and products, marketing and finance, quality assurance systems, occupational health and safety, and human resource management," Ms Harrop said. "The other area is grains and the environment, and this looks at ecology and sustainability of grain systems, crop and pasture rotations, environmental impacts and management, native vegetation and soil conservation, legal issues and property management planning.

"During trimester two, the units cover grain production and crop protection."

Ms Harrop said UNE's Sustainable Grains Production course allowed students to study from home over a one to two-year period, depending on personal time commitments. Each of the four units has an intensive school which is held in a regional centre such as Wagga Wagga (NSW), Horsham (Victoria) or Adelaide (South Australia).

For more information go to www.une.edu.au/grainproduction

Funding news

Recreational Fishing Grants Program (RFGP)

Every year the Victorian Government, through the Recreational Fishing Licence Trust Account, disburses revenue derived from the sale of Recreational Fishing Licences to projects that will improve recreational fishing in Victoria.

Large Grants Program open

This program provides funding for projects in one or more of the following project areas:

- recreational fishing access and facilities
- recreational fisheries' sustainability and habitat improvement
- recreational fisheries-related education, information and training
- recreational fisheries research.

Preference will be given to projects that leverage off other projects, and/or which some financial co-funding or in-kind contribution can be made by the project proponent(s) to the funds being sought.

What is not funded?

Funding is not available for individuals or for improvements to recreational boating-related infrastructure that may be funded from recreational vessel registration fees under the control of the Department of Transport.

Large grant applications close 28 February 2013.

Enquiries about the Department of Transport *Boating Safety & Facilities Program* should be directed to the Grants Administration Team on 1800 337 222 or via email boating.grants@transport.vic.gov.au.

Regional Arts Victoria welcomes small town transformations

Regional Arts Victoria welcomes the Victorian Government's announcement of *Small Town Transformations*, to be delivered in 2013-14 by Regional Arts Victoria.



REGIONAL ARTS VICTORIA

SMALL TOWN TRANSFORMATIONS



“This summer, we welcome Victorians all across our state to join our discussion on how art can transform your town.”

Small Town Transformations invites you to be ambitious in imagining what transformation might mean for your town – now, and into the future. Start some conversations in the studio, at the neighbour’s, with the council, on the street – in all the spaces where art is made and shared.

Tweet @RegionalArtsVic and #RAVsmalltowns into the conversation and join the state-wide conversation on the blog.

For more information, and to join in the discussion, visit www.smalltowns.rav.net.au

Small Town Transformations marks Regional Arts Victoria's renewed interest in the creative power of art to make place. “The places where we make, share, experience and discuss art are vital to community life, as well as to artistic innovation,” said Regional Arts Victoria’s Director, Esther Anatolitis. “*Small Town Transformations* will support significant projects across any artform that will create a lasting legacy of inspiration.”

Small Town Transformations will fund creative projects from small towns of less than 1,500 people.

Applicants should be based in the town and the proposed projects should be locally driven. Up to \$350,000 will be available for up to five projects that involve strong community support and participation, and will be able to deliver a significant impact. The two-stage application process begins on Monday, 14 January 2013, and applications will be assessed by an independent panel of experts.

The Small Town Transformations program aims to celebrate the ideas, creativity and resourcefulness in Victoria’s small towns, asking communities to envisage how the arts can effect change, improve infrastructure and opportunities, and help realise local aspirations. The Victorian Government has committed \$2 million over the next two years as a pilot to help bring some of the best ideas to fruition, and further demonstrate the impact the arts can have on our towns.

“This initiative strengthens Victoria’s creative potential by giving communities from smaller towns the opportunity to collaborate on artistic projects of significant impact and legacy,” said Ms Anatolitis. “It’s an extraordinary opportunity.”

