

VICTORIAN

LANDCARE

Summer 06 Issue 38

& CATCHMENT MANAGEMENT



WATER FEATURE

Leigh River focus group

Restoring farm wetlands

Water weed alert

Flooding Gunbower Forest

Landcare

SUMMER 06 ISSUE 38

contents

03 From the editors

05 LandLearn

An innovative program that links schools and Landcare groups and gets city kids out in to the bush.

06 The history of Landcare

We continue our series on 20 years of Landcare with this story on the birth of the movement by Horrie Poussard.

10 Six years of saving Flooding Creek

An urban Landcare group from Sale battles to restore a degraded creek that runs through their town.

12 A river runs through it – the Leigh River Focus Group

Landholders from three different Landcare groups are working together to manage the difficult escarpment zone along the river they share.

14 Restoring a farm wetland

Farmer Jane Reid documents her efforts to restore a wetland on her property back to its original state.

16 Watch out for these water weeds

Salvinia and Water Hyacinth are a danger to our rivers. They block channels, choke out other plants and restrict fishing and recreation.

18 A new life for Hopkins Falls

How the Hopkins Falls Landcare Group restored Warrnambool's mini Niagara.

20 Flooding the Gunbower

Endangered water birds benefit from an environmental water delivery that mimics the natural flow of the Murray River.

Editorial contributions

Carrie Tiffany, PO Box 1135, Mitcham North 3132
Phone 0405 697 548
E-mail: carrie65@optusnet.com.au

Mailing list enquiries

Landcare Co-ordinator
Victorian Farmers Federation
Phone 9207 5527 Fax 9207 5500

Advertising

Paul Crock Phone 0418 377 264

Cover photograph

River Red Gum at Ned's Corner
on the Murray by Mark Schapper

Back issues of the Victorian Landcare & Catchment Management magazine can be found at www.dse.vic.gov.au/victorianlandcaremagazine

Published by the Victorian Government
Department of Sustainability and Environment.

© The State of Victoria Department of Sustainability and Environment 2006

This publication is copyright. No part may be reproduced by any process except in accordance with the provisions of the Copyright Act 1968.

Authorised by the Victorian Government,
8 Nicholson Street, East Melbourne.

Printed by Bouquet Productions 9600 9155
Printed on 100% Recycled Paper



ISSN 1327 5496

This publication may be of assistance to you but the State of Victoria and its employees do not guarantee that the publication is without flaw of any kind or is wholly appropriate for your particular purposes and therefore disclaims liability for any error, loss or other consequences which may arise from you relying on any information in this publication.

The Department of Sustainability and Environment acknowledges contributions made by private enterprise. Acceptance of these contributions, however, does not endorse or imply endorsement by the department of any product or service offered by the contributors.



Sheep Camp participants investigate sheep management practices.



A Dethridge wheel for vine irrigation in Mildura.



A release of water from the Hume Dam. Water release isn't necessarily timed with natural wetland wetting and drying regimes.

From the editors

We hope you enjoy our new look magazine. As well as incorporating many of the suggestions we have received from readers in the recent reader survey (see story on page 5) we thought it was time for a makeover.

Our stories on the history of Landcare continue with Horrie Poussard's account of the birth of the movement on page 6. This story provides some good background to the article from Terry Simpson in Issue 37 recounting the achievements of the last 20 years of Landcare.

This year has seen many groups and regions coming together to celebrate Landcare's important anniversary. The regional roundup feature on pages 22-23 provides a snapshot of some of these activities across the State.

Water is at the heart of this issue of the magazine. Our state of the water report shows why so many farmers in Victoria have been doing it hard. While our story on the flooding of Gunbower Forest demonstrates how the environment can benefit from water surplus.

We profile farmers dealing with small scale wetlands on their farms, through to large whole-of-catchment projects. A rural Landcare group documents its works on public land

around Warrnambool and an inspired urban Landcare group from Sale tackles the restoration of a rundown creek that runs through its township.

Our recent survey identified that weeds are one of the most important concerns for our readers. The next edition of the magazine (Issue 39, March 2007) will have a weeds theme and will also cover some of the key stories to come out of the International Landcare Conference. Please send us your stories and comments on these topics by Friday 12 January 2007.

Issue 40 (July 2007) will look at the changing Landcare audience. The future challenge for Landcare groups will be to remain relevant and accessible to a changing rural demographic with an increasingly diverse mix of broadacre and intensive farmers, hobby farmers, lifestylers and absentee landholders.

We are interested in receiving stories and ideas on innovative ways for Landcare groups to be inclusive and to improve the connections between urban and rural dwellers. The submission date for this issue is Friday 11 May 2007.

Teresa Oppy and Carrie Tiffany



Carrie Tiffany.

About the editor

The editorial committee, with assistance from one of our readers, David Cummings, would like to acknowledge Carrie Tiffany's contribution to Landcare and catchment management in Victoria.

Carrie started out as the editor of Salt Force News and moved on to produce the *Victorian Landcare Magazine*. She was sharpening the pencils for Issue 1 and is still working away on Issue 38 over ten years later. She has contributed quietly, unobtrusively but effectively, always fighting to maintain the community focus of the magazine.

Carrie is a writer of considerable skill. Her first novel, *Everyman's Rules for Scientific Living* (Picador), was recently published in Australia, the US and the UK and was quickly shortlisted for a host of major literary prizes. The book is essentially about land management and in Carrie's many publicity encounters in the last year she has been an unfailing champion for Landcare.

We are fortunate indeed to have her working for our cause.

Two views of the Murray River:



Ned's Corner around 1914.
Photo from the Trust for Nature
collection donated by Mrs Pearson.



Near the Victorian/NSW border in 2006.

Letter to the editors



Dear Editors,

A recent discussion at a Landcare function raised the issue of what might deter farmers from joining Landcare groups.

About half the members of the Loch/Nyora Landcare Group have less than five hectares of land and mostly for lifestyle reasons.

Of all the farmers in our area only about 30 are Landcare members. It stands to reason that there are factors deterring farmers from joining, in spite of the benefits of access to grants through various government and conservation bodies.

A brief discussion suggested that there are too many prescriptive conditions placed on grants making most of them counterproductive and the farmer would rather go without the assistance than submit to bureaucratic restrictions.

The required width of shelterbelts and waterway plantings in the hilly, high rainfall areas of West Gippsland are the same as those for the flat, dry areas of the State. This usually means three or four times more land area is excluded from production. The result is often nothing planted. If the width of plantings is left unspecified and to the discretion of the farmer and the Landcare representative we are likely to see more planting.

The prohibition on harvesting trees supplied through various Landcare grants is also a problem. Farmers are interested in productivity and the maintenance or improvement of their property value and will strive to achieve that goal. Planting trees is one way to meet that goal, so if they or their descendants can harvest mature trees for firewood or saw logs, they can visualise the benefit.

As the Landcare trees mature, the farmer will be convinced of their value to productivity and will continue to plant. The benefit to the farmer and the overall environment will be greatly improved over any supposed loss of Landcare trees.

Let us push Landcare, but not so we stand in the way.

Robert Vickers
Loch/Nyora Landcare Group



Robert Vickers with a four-metre wide shelterbelt of *Melaleuca ericaefolia*, *Acacia melanoxylon* and *Eucalyptus globulus*.

Best letter

Robert Vickers wins this issue's book prize for his interesting letter. Robert will receive a copy of the *National Trust Desk Diary 2007*, featuring the outstanding works of the Botanical Art School of Melbourne led by Jenny Phillips. The diary is available for \$25.00 from Bloomings Books. Contact sales@bloomings.com.au

Please send your letters to Carrie Tiffany at the address on page two. Letters should be less than 300 words and may be edited.

An eight-metre wide shelterbelt on the property of John and Tricia Fleming at Fish Creek.



The site prepared for planting in September 1988.



Growth to 1.6 metres in April 1991.



A useful windbreak in September 1992.



The paddock showing signs of reduced wind velocity in July 1995.

Reader survey 2006

We have been delighted with the response to the reader survey included in the last issue of the magazine. There were 569 respondents to the survey and we have been reading all of the surveys closely to make sure we are meeting the needs of our readers.

Respondents were most interested in practical stories (75%), new research findings (61%) and individual farmer case studies (57%). This is followed by interest in information about grants and incentives (43%) and news from Landcare groups and networks (41%).

A large number of readers reported that they were very happy with the publication

and that it should continue along the current format. Many readers made suggestions for stories to include in future issues. Stories on weeds, water conservation, salinity and pest control rated highly.

In this issue you will notice several changes. A new, cleaner design style, a feature on weeds, more weblinks and an article on LandLearn – all of these changes are in direct response to feedback from our reader survey.

In future issues we will also be looking at improving the environmental values of the magazine and following up the long list of story suggestions that readers provided.



Teresa Oppy from DSE draws the reader survey prizes. Copies of Feather and Brush: Three Centuries of Australian Bird Art by Penny Olsen will be sent to Ray Malcolm of Benalla, Gaye Cooke of Pakenham and Mrs D. P. McDonald of Surrey Hills.

LandLearn spreads the word

By Lydia Fehring & Ann Fagan

LandLearn is a DPI education program that delivers Landcare education to students and school communities.

LandLearn encourages learning and teaching to achieve sustainable landscapes through providing a balanced approach to sustainability education.

LandLearn provides curriculum resources to encourage schools to include learning about natural resource management and Landcare in their curriculum and links classroom and schoolground activities to community projects and catchment strategies.

Notre Dame College at Shepparton uses salinity as a focus in teaching year nine geography with a fieldwork unit from LandLearn's *Agriculture & Land Management Fieldwork Kit*. From 2001-2006 approximately 1000 students have been on the salinity field trip.

Local farmers support the fieldwork by providing access to sites on their land. Their generosity has been returned by students assisting with revegetation on their farms. These activities

enhance student learning and emphasise that everyone has responsibility to care for the land and can contribute to positive local action.

Sheep Camp is a program delivered by LandLearn in partnership with three schools and with support from Australian Wool Innovation through the University of Tasmania Primary Industry Science program.

The program works to bridge the urban-rural divide with students investigating the sheep industry. Sheep Camp gives them hands-on experience of agriculture to support their learning in the classroom and on their small school farms.

Students visit a commercial farm, Warrambeen, where they take a close look at common sheep husbandry practices, the National Wool Museum at Geelong and the DPI research farm at Werribee where they observe real life, practical examples of science-based agricultural research.

LandLearn produces a range of curriculum-linked resources that are effective, easy to use and readily adapted to local conditions. LandLearn's latest resource booklet *Biodiversity in Balance* explores the balance between agricultural production and biodiversity conservation in the classroom, schoolgrounds and local community. This resource is currently available from LandLearn as a pdf file.

LandLearn can provide assistance to Landcare co-ordinators and to volunteers through professional learning workshops, providing innovative activities to use with students and advice on structuring and delivering programs for schools. Contact LandLearn for more information.

Lydia Fehring and Ann Fagan work for DPI delivering LandLearn across the State. For more information visit the LandLearn website www.landlearn.net.au



Students on fieldwork in the Shepparton Irrigation Region test groundwater salinity levels.



“

(Land Care) will be group-driven; that is, its management will be by local groups who will co-operate towards a defined (Land Care) objective... Poussard, Land Protection Service 1986.

”

Attendees at the launch descend Stricta Hill, Vinjallok after an inspection of onground works.

The history of Landcare in

By Horrie Poussard

It is now 20 years since Landcare first started in Victoria. In 1986 Horrie Poussard was Senior Policy Officer for the Land Protection Service in the then Department of Conservation Forests and Lands. This is how Landcare was born.

The rural conservation environment

In the 1960s and 1970s there was a growing awareness throughout Victoria of the need to do something about land degradation. Soil erosion, salinity, rural tree decline and outbreaks of rabbit and weed problems were key issues at farmer meetings and in the rural press. Occasionally, as in the huge dust storm that came to Melbourne in 1983, these issues hit the city press.

In response to these concerns, State agencies and the rural community initiated a number of innovative programs.

In the 1960s the Soil Conservation Authority developed the Group Conservation Area concept in which sub-catchment plans were drawn up to identify the protection activities and local practices needed to stabilise degraded areas.

In the late 1970s Project Branchout became a well-recognised program in central Victoria for revegetation of predominantly bare rural landscapes. This program organised often unemployed people to plant trees in strategic locations on farms and other rural areas.

In 1980 a *Focus on Farm Trees* conference was held. This led to the establishment of the VFF program of Farm Tree Groups. By 1990 there were 50 active groups across the State.

The State Salinity Program was developed and launched in 1985, following the outcomes of the 1982 Parliamentary Inquiry into Salinity in Victoria which identified widespread and growing concern for the impact of salinity on rural productivity and some rural communities.

The Potter Farmland Plan (1984-88) developed examples of integrated farm planning and management on 15 selected farms, and financially supported these demonstration farms around Hamilton in western Victoria.

It was within this positive environmental context that the spark of Landcare took hold.

Initial steps

In 1983 the Department of Conservation Forests and Lands was formed. Within this new mega department the Land Protection Service (LPS) was charged with overseeing the policies and programs associated with soil conservation, weeds and pest animals, and tree growing on private land.

In April 1986, the then Minister for Conservation, Joan Kirner, asked LPS to develop a program to guide the land protection-related activities of CFL. Her directions were that the approach needed to *be integrated (between the existing land protection concerns), have significant community involvement and have a significant effect on local productivity and conservation.*

Following extensive consultation within and outside the department we came up with the following proposal:

(Land Care) will be group-driven; that is, its management will be by local groups who will co-operate towards a defined (Land Care) objective... The purpose of (Land Care) groups is to focus, and give practical, local expression to local needs, enthusiasms, initiatives and to integrate local and Government strategies, plans and resources to that end.

Poussard, Land Protection Service 1986.

Putting together the LandCare Program

As soon as Land Care was approved we needed to turn the concept into a workable and popular land protection program. Land Care



The LandCare banner raised between ironbark trees at the launch.

Victoria

soon became LandCare, similar to the names of other current government programs, WorkCare and MediCare.

LandCare was a neat word with a broad, positive feel to it, but it still created some concern within and outside Parliament. Some State Labor Cabinet Ministers were concerned that it may downgrade existing important Government programs (Kirner, 2006). Others in the community with different political views saw it as part of a 'socialist' program, at odds with the basically conservative rural community, and therefore lacking credibility (Jack, 1986).

Joan Kirner knew that she had to get the VFF involved if the program was to have good credibility within the farming community. Fortunately, she had a good working relationship with Heather Mitchell, who was the first and only woman President of the VFF.

Heather Mitchell became co-chair with Joan Kirner of the LandCare Program and the two leaders worked well together. Both launched numerous LandCare groups around the State over the next three years and in the process became much appreciated and admired by group members.

The mechanics of the LandCare Program were quickly addressed, including program administration, financial and technical support to groups, promotion and publicity, training of CFL



Horrie Poussard came up with the name LandCare during his time as a senior policy officer with the Land Protection Service.

staff, identification and recognition of groups and training of group leaders.

The 1986 Melbourne Show in 1986 provided an opportunity to introduce the first LandCare logo – a sunflower. The sunflower was intended to show a positive, natural image while also portraying links to agricultural production. There was some strong opposition from those who thought a tree image would represent all of LandCare's aspirations. The sunflower logo was used for several years until the Federal Landcare program's hands logo was developed.

LandCare groups

LandCare was a government-initiated program based on government community partnerships. In many cases the community partner was a group of local farmers. However, early groups included some concerned with the improvement of public land in their area.

Groups were not identified on geographical or statutory boundaries or on an interest only basis (as were many farming and farm tree groups). LandCare groups had a sociological basis – they needed to show that their members could work together to improve their local area.



At the launch of LandCare in 1986 (from left) the Minister for Conservation Forests and Lands, Hon. Joan Kirner, Terry Simpson, local representative on the State Land Protection Advisory Committee, Peter Douglas, President of Shire of Kara Kara and John Boadle from the then Department of Conservation Forests and Lands.

In addition the group needed to be involved in the planning, implementation and ongoing maintenance of their project.

Sometimes the group could be small (5-10 members), provided it had a common community bond. The group's project had to have the potential for a major improvement in the productivity and/or amenity value of the local area.

The emphasis on setting up a strong local group, the importance of local planning and the need to take an integrated approach to land protection issues were the key elements that separated LandCare from previous group activities.

Launching LandCare

LandCare was launched on 25 November 1986 at *Stricta Hill*, Winjallock, a small farming community near St Arnaud in Central Victoria. The launch drew a great crowd and was well publicised through various regional and State newspapers. And thus LandCare was born in Victoria.

Water reporting a key to managing scarce resources

By Emma Donaldson

Victoria's long dry period has had a profound impact on the way we use and manage water resources. Planning for a future of reduced water availability is arguably the most important concern for water resource planners today.

Access to sound data, and quality trend projections around climate and resource changes has never been more important.

While all water authorities and CMAs keep a close eye on their own water use and supply, the opportunity to access a complete picture of water allocation and use across Victoria for the entire year at bulk supply level is a key element in ensuring water resources are managed sustainably.

The Government's annual *State Water Report 2004-05* provides this overview, monitoring and accounting for water allocation and use across the State.

The report, compiled by the Water Sector Group of DSE, is only the second report to have been compiled and will continue to be produced annually to provide this statewide perspective.

"Determining how a finite volume of water is shared between all users is one of the key challenges we must address," Executive Director of Water Resource Policy division Campbell Fitzpatrick said.

"Less rain, smaller water allocations and reduced flows in many of the State's waterways means that all water users are making adjustments to the way water resources are managed."

Nine years below average

In 2004-05 most of Victoria experienced below average rainfall. It was the ninth consecutive year of below average rainfall for much of the State and placed continual stress on many rural and urban water supplies. Depleted levels in reservoirs particularly in western regions, reduced recharge to groundwater reserves,

lower flow levels in waterways and reductions in direct extractions from waterways were all outcomes of the dry conditions.

Victorian irrigators were affected in different ways by the conditions over the period. In many regions there were restrictions on water use in irrigation areas.

"As with previous years, seasonal water allocations were made to irrigators proportional to the volume allowed to them under the terms of their irrigator's water entitlement or licence. Water authorities then make adjustments to the allocations as the season progresses in accordance with resource availability," Campbell explained.

End of season allocations in 2004/05 remained well below 100% in the Campaspe, Coliban, Wimmera and Maribyrnong systems. Irrigators

“

Less rain, smaller water allocations and reduced flows in many of the State's waterways means that all water users are making adjustments to the way water resources are managed.

”



An irrigation channel in the Grampians.



A Dethridge wheel for vine irrigation in Mildura.

supplied from the Wimmera, Maribyrnong and Campaspe systems were worst affected by the continuing drought. In the Campaspe basin, irrigators received only 39% of their licence volume.

In the Wimmera basin, Grampians Wimmera Mallee Water was able to offer an allocation of 7% to irrigators. This was the third season in a row that Wimmera-Mallee irrigators received a zero or very small allocation.

In the Maribyrnong basin, the volume of water stored in Rosslynne Reservoir remained low throughout the irrigation season because of below-average inflows. Consequently, irrigators on Jacksons Creek and the Maribyrnong River received no allocation for much of the season, until an allocation of 25% was announced in late February 2005.

Recycled water assists some irrigators

By contrast, irrigators in the Werribee and Bacchus Marsh systems received 100% of their allocation (more than double that received in 2003/04) due to the supply of recycled water from Melbourne's Western Treatment Plant.

In addition, bans on flow diversions from 49 unregulated streams across Victoria were enforced at various times throughout the year, particularly during the summer months.

Such scarcity and resultant restrictions meant that many irrigators used Victoria's water markets to supplement their allocations. The water trading which took place was mostly between irrigators themselves, although a small number of water authorities also used the water market to supplement their supplies or to take advantage of their excess entitlement to meet the needs of irrigators seeking to add to their seasonal allocation.

Planning for scarcity

The trends that are evident in the *State Water Report* highlight the importance of careful planning and management of our precious water resources. Already, significant adjustments have been made and agriculture, industry and water managers are becoming better equipped to forecast and plan sustainably amidst a changing environment.

"Water scarcity is a modern day reality. A unified, well-informed approach to water resource management is the only way forward.

"As we continue to improve methods for sharing and accessing water markets and refine processes for monitoring and reporting on water availability across the State, sustainable use of water resources will ensure water availability for our future," Campbell Fitzpatrick said.

“

Water scarcity is a modern day reality. A unified, well-informed approach to water resource management is the only way forward.

”



Sale Cubs and Scouts at the West Saleyards site on Flooding Creek. They planted these trees two years before in atrocious conditions.

Six years of saving Flooding Creek

By Jenny O'Neill

On Australia Day 2000 the Mayor of Wellington Shire, John Jago, gave a speech in which he promised that Flooding Creek would flow again.

“

This is where the Flooding Creek Landcare Group differs from many other Landcare groups – the sheer numbers of stakeholders involved in the creek restoration project.

”

Two months later a public meeting was held and the Flooding Creek Urban Landcare Group came into being. This story is a history of the group and a commentary on the difficulties an urban Landcare group can encounter when working on restoring a local waterway.

Flooding Creek is in the Gippsland town of Sale. The town was actually called Flooding Creek township until the 1830s. The creek initially runs south, forming the western boundary of the town, flowing into the Port of Sale. Resuming south-east of the port, it forms the western and southern boundary of Lake Guyatt. From there it flows east of the RAMSAR significant wetlands and into the Latrobe River, just past the historic Swing Bridge.

Over the years Flooding Creek had been used as a dumping ground for industrial and domestic waste. Various weeds had invaded it and it had been redirected a few times, all of which resulted in impeded health and slower flow.

Because Flooding Creek has such a stop-start meandering urban journey it has many

neighbours. This is where the Flooding Creek Landcare Group differs from many other Landcare groups – the sheer numbers of stakeholders involved in the creek restoration project.

So many stakeholders

There are the usual suspects. Shire, CMA, Parks Victoria, private landholders and business landholders. But not all areas of the creek are easy to access and in the town there is another stakeholder to deal with every 50 metres of creek frontage. Some are welcoming, some are suspicious. Fortunately only one was downright rude.

To make matters more complicated most of the active members of the Landcare group are not landholders adjoining the creek. Access to the creek is through private land held by other landholders and in the few areas where it can be accessed the sites are very narrow; around five to ten metres wide.

Many people attended the inaugural meeting of the group, but it turned out a lot of them just



Wendy Phelan, the leader of the Sale Cubs and Scouts, has been involved in nine activities at Flooding Creek over five years.

“

Urban groups can encounter strong competing or complementary interests with others. We were constantly deciding how active we wanted to be in supporting the tourism, rezoning or engineering agendas of others in improving the creek.

”

wanted to make sure the group wasn't acting contrary to their interests. A smaller core of active members then formed.

There is a mix of knowledge and experience in the group. Our Water Watch Co-ordinator Greg Gilbert and grow your own seed stalwarts Debbie and Bryan Ray have been the backbone that has kept the group informed and operating. Some members, such as myself, had to be taught what blackberries and boxthorn were.

The group has had active support from Sale Cubs and Scouts, the CMA, Green Corps, Greening Australia, all three secondary schools, our Landcare co-ordinators and the Shire. But it has been hard to keep negotiating with the long line of stakeholders. I feel this is an under-acknowledged activity in many urban Landcare groups.

Competing interests

Urban groups can encounter strong competing or complementary interests with others. We were constantly deciding how active we wanted to be in supporting the tourism, rezoning or engineering agendas of others in improving the creek.

Over the last six years the group has developed 11 sites and relinquished involvement in four. The other sites are being monitored for weeds, rabbits and replanting and we are now

concentrating on planting sites one at a time, in spring and autumn. The group initially took on too much for our capacity and we are now redressing that.

Tips for success

As our skill and knowledge base has improved we have been able to complete some tasks as individuals. This saves group effort. Every second year we commit to cleaning up a section of the creek with Waterwatch.

Public profile is important. We created a Power Point presentation profiling our achievements and are getting an aerial photograph mounted for public display. Armbands help identify us at group plantings and a poster guide shows what we have achieved. We have recently compiled our history and will soon be developing our 3-5 year action plan.

We now meet bi-monthly and focus on doing and not telling. We have BBQs, Christmas drinks and show and tells. It is hard to keep people engaged with a creek they barely see, identify with or use, so all of this is important.

Laughing and learning

So what has been great about the Flooding Creek Landcare Group and continues to be great? The partnerships, plans, camaraderie, laughing and learning. Seeing weeds die and rabbits decrease.

Disagreeing, getting wet and windblown and being surprised and unbelievably happy when the plants have weathered all and are growing strongly.

After six years of activity sections of Flooding Creek are definitely healthier, have slightly better flow and there is positive commitment and activity from the members and many stakeholders along the creek.

For further information contact Jenny O'Neill on 5144 2461.



Jenny O'Neill and friends at a maintenance day at the West Saleyards site

A river runs through it – the Leigh River Focus Group unites local farmers

By Andrea Mason

Landholders from three different Landcare groups are working together to manage the difficult escarpment zone along the river they share.

The Leigh River has historically been used as a dividing line between local government, agencies such as DPI and DSE, community groups and Landcare groups. The steep physical nature of the gorge country has also created a social divide and yet the adjoining landholders are only metres apart.

The only places to cross the river are at Mt Mercer, Shelford and Inverleigh, over 30 kilometres apart. Consequently landholders from the east side gravitate towards Geelong while those on the west head to Ballarat.

However, to the Leigh Catchment Group the Leigh River is the centre of the catchment – the jewel in the crown. The importance of the river in the Corangamite catchment for its rare flora and fauna is well documented.

The Leigh Catchment Group, made up of 10 local Landcare groups, has been working with

local landholders to address environmental management problems concerned with the river with the aim of matching land use with land capability for production and environmental outcomes.

The Leigh Catchment Group has formed a special Leigh River Focus Group made up of participants from three Landcare groups in the catchment: the Grenville Landcare Group, Leigh Districts Landcare Group and the Bamganie/Meredith Landcare Group.

The problem

In the 30-kilometre section of the Leigh River between Mt Mercer and Shelford most of the agriculture is on the flat plains country. Approximately 600 hectares of steep and wide escarpment country between these plains and the riparian zone is non-arable.

However, there are some sections along the river which sheep can access due to the gentler slopes. Here the escarpment vegetation tends to include a mix of native and non-native pastures and weeds such as thistles and, increasingly, Paterson's curse and serrated tussock.

Set stocking and over-grazing are also leading to decreased pasture viability, reduced vigour of the native grass and shrub flora, increased soil erosion and increased probability of weed infestations through stock tracking and exposed soils.

The solution

A \$34,000 grant from the National Landcare Program will allow the Leigh River Focus Group to work with farmers to demonstrate the differences between strategic stock management, controlled grazing and spray/graze techniques, stock exclusion and revegetation to improve the balance between cropping, grazing and remnant vegetation.



The impact of different grazing regimes close to the Leigh River.



Locals work together on planning the future of the Leigh River.



The Leigh River has been a dividing rather than a uniting feature on the local landscape.

The team will map local soil issues and set up soil monitoring sites to determine the impact grazing regimes and pasture improvement may have on improving soil health conditions.

To tackle weed problems the group will run demonstrations on how to manage pasture and environmental weeds such as Paterson's curse, serrated tussock and wild teasel.

They will also promote perennial pasture maintenance to ensure healthy plant cover on all slopes and eliminate bare ground niches which offer opportunities for weed invasion.

The combination of these activities promises to have noticeable benefits for production by improving pasture vigour and quality. It will also improve the management of the escarpment zones by controlling stock access to this difficult terrain.

According to Leigh Catchment Group chairman and landowner Brian Parker, the formation of the Leigh River Focus Group has brought local landholders together to tackle a problem traditionally faced alone.

"We are hoping this project will enable us to learn from each other and improve our property management while improving the health of our great river.

"Farmers further down the catchment will also benefit from the activities through improved waterways and the reduction in nutrient load and soil loss, and reduced weed infestation," Brian Parker said.

United by a river

The Leigh Catchment Group will work with the Corangamite CMA and DPI to implement the project. The Corangamite CMA has also been undertaking a willow removal and significant weed control program of remnant vegetation in this section of the river over the past two years to protect the significant flora.

The work of the Leigh Catchment Group shows how a catchment scale approach to Landcare can bring broad benefits. All of the parties along the Leigh River are now working towards a common goal. A better understanding of each other's issues has resulted from the way the Leigh Catchment Group works. This has broken down perceptions of who is to blame and brought an acceptance of joint responsibility for catchment health.

For further information contact Andrea Mason, Landcare officer with the Leigh Catchment Group, on 5341 2364.

Leigh River snapshot

Situated in the centre of a major agricultural area producing fine wool, sheep, beef and crops the Leigh River is listed as a High Priority River in the Corangamite CMA River Health Strategy due to the highly significant flora in the riparian zones.

Significant species include cluster pomaderris, snowy mint-bush, austral tobacco, giant hop bush, tree violet and the white cypress pine (depleted in Victoria).

Much of the steep and wide escarpment country between the plains and the river's riparian zone is non-arable. On the gentler slopes that have stock access the escarpment vegetation includes a mix of native and non-native pastures and weeds. Thistles are increasing, as well as paterson's curse and serrated tussock. These areas are a management nightmare for local farmers, even though they appreciate the beauty of the river.



Jane Reid is working to return a wetland on her farm back to its natural wetting and drying regime.

What nature intended – restoring a

For farmer Jane Reid the benchmark as to whether her efforts to restore a wetland on her property

"I'll know we'll have been successful when I see the wading birds return to the mudflats in summer," says Jane.

Jane Reid owns a 160-hectare property along the banks of the Murray River near Howlong, west of Albury. She came to the river flats four years ago from a cattle property in the Upper Murray and is quick to admit she has been on a steep learning curve, particularly when it comes to understanding wetlands and the environmental consequences of altered flow regimes along the Murray.

A keen horsewoman, Jane was attracted to the property because of its suitability for riding and the wetland right in the middle of it. The ephemeral wetland on the property is linked to the Murray by a channel off a lagoon. When the water in the river is high, it flows into the wetland and then makes its way back to the Murray via another channel and anabranch.

"The trouble is, because of the regulated flows, when water is released from the Hume Dam, it is usually back to front to what would have

happened naturally. Instead of the wetland having water in winter and spring, it is dry but flooded in summer," Jane says.

Releases of water along the Murray for environmental purposes can help, but some winters, even with an environmental release, Jane says there hasn't been enough water to flush out the wetland so that its waters can reach the anabranch.

"I would like to reverse the current wetting/drying regime and return the wetland to its natural state."

Jane approached the NSW Murray Wetlands Working Group about using her wetland as a model to explore how to re-establish the natural wetting and drying regime of the wetland. The group has plans to install a bladder into the channel that links the lagoon to the wetland so as to block the water out in summer. The next step is to get water into the wetland during winter/spring which possibly can be done by using the lagoon as a reservoir.

Jane has already made progress in achieving her



The algae on the Howlong farm wetland is caused by a nutrient imbalance which should right itself over time.



A release of water from the Hume Dam. Water release isn't necessarily timed with natural wetland wetting and drying regimes.

“

I'm working towards getting the wetland back to its natural state. The word natural is the key. I see myself as the caretaker of this land, not its owner. I have a responsibility to look after it.

”

farm wetland

By Margrit Beamster

back to its original state is simple.

vision of rehabilitating the wetland, which she estimates covers an area of about 10 hectares. When she first came to the property in 2002, a very dry year saw red gum seedlings take over the wetland.

With advice from an environmental consultant and financial assistance from the Murray Catchment Management Authority and the Wetlands Working Group she has removed the seedlings, fenced the wetland off from stock and planted 3000 native understorey species around the wetland's edges.

Jane is really excited by what has been achieved.

"I'm working towards getting the wetland back to its natural state. The word natural is the key. I see myself as the caretaker of this land, not its owner. I have a responsibility to look after it."

Margrit Beamster is Communications Co-ordinator at the Charles Sturt University Institute for Land, Water and Society. For further information contact Margrit on (02) 6051 9653. www.csu.edu.au/research/ilws

How the wetland water is spread

The NSW Murray Wetlands Working Group was established in 1992 as an initiative of the Murray and Lower Murray-Darling Catchment Management Committees. The committees recognised the continuing loss and degradation of wetlands along the Murray and established the group to develop and implement well-researched, technically sound and community-endorsed management programs for wetlands.

Since 2000 the group has had the responsibility of managing Adaptive Environmental Water (water for environmental flows from the NSW Government). It is able to receive a maximum of 32,000 megalitres of water each year. A certain amount of water is allocated based on previous experience.

"One of the big unknowns is whether or not there will be a flood," explains Executive Officer Deb Nias.

"If there is a big flood event, our first choice is to add our water into the large wetlands to sustain the flood. By piggybacking on a flood you can spread the water out for further and longer, and therefore get a bigger benefit. If we are unable to do this our second choice is to divert our water into the smaller wetlands. Our third choice is to trade residual water when the projects are finished."

The group has been able to become financially sustainable by trading any residual of unused water allocation.

"We try to use our water in an ecologically sensible framework. In the upper catchment area spring is the best time to provide water for wetlands as this mimics a more natural wetting pattern. However, further downstream in the Lower Murray-Darling region, flooding could often happen in summer or early autumn."



Statewide members of the Victorian Weed Alert Team.

“

Both these aquatic plants rapidly form large floating mats or rafts in slow moving or still water. They can block waterways, choke other aquatic plants, restrict access for fishing and other recreation, and block irrigation channels and drainage lines.

”



Water hyacinth is able to spread across the water surface forming a dense mat.

Watch out for these

A number of Victoria's serious noxious weeds are aquatics. Two in particular are free-floating plants that multiply rapidly across the water surface and clog water bodies.

Salvinia and water hyacinth

Salvinia (*Salvinia molesta*) is a floating aquatic fern from South America. It is one of the 20 Weeds of National Significance in Australia.

In the right conditions salvinia can double the water surface area it covers in ten days. Fragments of the plant break off and float away to form new plants.

Salvinia has been grown in garden ponds and dams for decoration. The individual leaves of the plant are about 2.5 centimetres by 2 centimetres and are either flat or folded

depending on how closely packed the plants are.

Water hyacinth (*Eichhornia crassipes*) is also free-floating, but a perennial herb from Brazil. It can often be seen on television in wildlife documentaries floating around hippos and crocodiles in Africa where it is also a weed. It can multiply rapidly and can double its area in five days vegetatively.

Water hyacinth has a spike of very delicate mauve flowers. The spent flower spike curls over under the water where it releases its seeds. The seeds sink to the bottom and germinate the following spring. Infested water bodies that are drained and dried out can still produce new plants from the buried seed when it is re-flooded. Buried seeds can remain viable for up to 20 years.

Both these aquatic plants rapidly form large floating mats or rafts in slow moving or still water. They can block waterways, choke other aquatic plants, restrict access for fishing and other recreation, and block irrigation channels and drainage lines. Water hyacinth has even caused the collapse of bridges when large masses of the plant pile up against the pylons.



Salvinia is one of Australia's 20 Weeds of National Significance.

water weeds

by Kate Blood

Salvinia and water hyacinth are State Prohibited Weeds under the *Catchment and Land Protection Act 1994*. They are occasionally found in the nursery or aquarium trade.

More information on these weeds is available as DPI Landcare Notes at www.dpi.vic.gov.au and management guides at http://www.weeds.crc.org.au/publications/weed_man_guides.html

State Prohibited Weeds

These noxious weeds (one of four categories) are declared under the CaLP Act and either do not occur in Victoria, or are already present but it is reasonable to expect that they can be eradicated.

The Victorian Government has responsibility for the control (and eradication) of State Prohibited Weeds, irrespective of where they might occur. It is important that they are reported as soon as possible to DPI on 136 186.

Under the CaLP Act, it is illegal to buy, sell, possess for sale, deposit onto land, bring into or transport around Victoria all declared noxious weeds. A current list of declared noxious weeds is available on the DPI website at: www.dpi.vic.gov.au/weeds

Victorian Alert Weeds

Victorian Alert Weeds are plants that are the weeds of the future and are under consideration for declaration under the CaLP Act. They pose a serious threat to Victoria's agricultural and natural assets or may affect human health.

Some of these weeds are thought to be naturalised in small numbers in Victoria and are eradicable from the State, some may occur in gardens or have not yet reached Victoria but present a huge threat if they were to arrive. Profiles of these future weeds will appear in following issues of *Victorian Landcare* magazine.

Victorian Alert Weeds are considered a top priority for further investigation to find out how widespread they are in Victoria. These weeds will undergo a detailed Weed Risk Assessment based on invasiveness, distribution and impacts and then be considered for declaration as noxious weeds.

Kate Blood is a member of the DPI Weed Alert team. The team deals with potential, new and emerging weeds to the State including State Prohibited and Victorian Alert Weeds. The team consists of seven statewide officers and a Weed Alert Contact Officer in each CMA area.

Weed Spotters wanted

In previous issues of this magazine DPI has called for volunteer Weed Spotters. The support and interest has been great and a number of readers have registered. Now that the Weed Alert team is in place, we have activated Weed Spotters across the State and asked them to report State Prohibited and Victorian Alert Weeds, and new plants to their district that they have never seen before.

DPI now has a Weed Spotter Co-ordinator who works with the Weed Alert Contact Officers around the State supporting the Weed Spotters. Over 20 Weed Spotter activities have been held in Victoria this spring including free training in how to identify and report new weeds. To register to become a Weed Spotter call 136 186.



Jane O'Beirne, Jenny Emeny, Alistair Adams, and Tim Bligh planting out at Hopkins Falls.

Fit for eels and safe for people

“As kids there were three things you could do at the falls: swim around, swim across and jump off.”

Alistair Adams

Twenty years after Alistair Adams last jumped off the falls as a kid he has been working with the local Landcare group to breathe new life into his favourite aquatic playground.

The falls are a significant tourist attraction in the area and are billed as Warrnambool's mini Niagara. At eleven metres high the emphasis is on mini, but with a width of about 90 metres they are one of the widest waterfalls not just in Victoria, but Australia.

A dangerous attraction

The Adams family has had a long association with the Lower Hopkins River. Alistair's aunt Merran Adams' property adjoins the river.

Merran Adams was one of the first people to lobby the local council to improve facilities at the falls.

“It was an accident waiting to happen. People had to clamber over boulders to get a view of the falls. It was impossible for some older people to see at all. Even once visitors had got to a vantage point bushes blocked the view and in some places there was no protection against falling into the falls,” Merran said.

Merran joined the Hopkins Falls Landcare Group and along with thirty other locals started working towards improving the area.

After careful planning things started to take shape three years ago. With \$35,000 from Glenelg Hopkins CMA and Moyne Shire Council and \$3000 via trust funds plus labour provided by Warrnambool City Council a viewing platform was put in and fencing replaced. The dangerous old wood-burning barbecue was also replaced with a new gas-burning one.

Over one thousand native trees – 25 different species including grasses and shrubs – have

been planted by the group over the last two years. One group member, Owen Ellemor, even took seeds from bulbine lilies growing at the falls and propagated them so they could be replanted back at the site. Plantings include manna gums, blackwoods, silver banksia, myrtle wattle, bidgee-widgee, running postman and Prickly Moses.

Eels bite the stones

Three interpretive boards are being installed to explain the cultural significance of the site. In the Kirrae Whurrong language the falls are known as Thangang-poonart which means ‘eels bite the stones’. This highly evocative name highlights the importance of eels on the river. About ten kilometres upstream from the falls at the Framlingham Aboriginal Community there are eel traps built into the river which have been used for thousands of years.

In a good migration year the Hopkins Falls is alive with eels twice. Sexually mature (10-25 years old) eels migrate downstream between October and May. They then swim 2000 kilometres to the Coral Sea near Vanuatu where they spawn and die. Female eels grow to over a metre while males are half that size.

“

Inspired by working at the falls many landholders with properties adjoining the river have fenced off the bank from livestock and planted swathes of native trees.

”



Shamus O'Beirne, Jude Bligh and Matthew Rea have some fun at a working bee.

– a new life for Hopkins Falls

by Kirsty Walker

Baby eels, or elvers, return to the Hopkins when they are between one and three years old and only five centimetres long. In October they begin the migration upstream. Elvers have been known to climb falls and man-made structures of 30 metres so the Hopkins is no problem.

Works inspire locals to fence and plant

Inspired by working at the falls many landholders with properties adjoining the river have fenced off the bank from livestock and planted swathes of native trees. Trees help stabilise the bank, act as filters for nutrient runoff from the surrounding land and help to keep the water cool for aquatic life such as eels.

Graham Adams, Alistair Adams' father, found there is another benefit to fencing.

"We used to get cows swimming across the river and it was a hell of a job to get them back. If a cow falls in the water it can't turn round so it swims to the other side."

Jane O'Beirne and her husband have fenced off and planted half of their two kilometres of

river bank upstream from the falls, providing alternative water sources for their cattle.

"We've planted river red gums and manna gums for koalas. My dream is to link with the native woodland at Framlingham, but there are several owners between them and us," Jane said.

In the meantime Jane and her family enjoy some of the other catchment creatures by canoe. They regularly see platypus on night-time paddles upstream from the falls.

According to Alistair Adams, less people swim in the river today thanks to easier access to Warrnambool and the facilities there.

"It's maybe just as well. Although we always checked for snags under the falls, it was pretty dangerous. These days I'd rather enjoy the falls from the new platform than from jumping in."

For further information about the Hopkins Falls Landcare Group contact Jane O'Beirne on 5567 1228.

Kirsty Walker wrote this article on behalf of the Hopkins Falls Landcare Group and the Glenelg Hopkins CMA.



The new viewing platform at Hopkins Falls.

“

Environmental water was delivered to Gunbower Forest to maintain several permanent and semi-permanent wetland complexes, protect and enhance the River Red Gum communities and provide breeding opportunities for colonial water birds – with spectacular results.

”



An ibis nesting in Gunbower Forest. Flooding has created a wildlife wonderland at this important wetland.

Flooding the Gunbower boosts

by Heidi Magner

Gunbower Forest is a complex wetland of international significance. When flooded it is a virtual wildlife wonderland.

Located on the Murray River between Echuca and Swan Hill, Gunbower is the second largest river red gum forest in Victoria.

Spanning 20,000 hectares and providing habitat for breeding and feeding, Gunbower Forest supports the lifecycles of many endangered colonial waterbirds and threatened and rare species.

In 2003 Gunbower Forest and the adjoining Koondrook-Perricoota Forest were identified as one of six Living Murray Icon sites.

An icon on the Murray

North Central CMA Gunbower Forest Project Officer Heidi Magner explained that The Living Murray Initiative was established to address the serious decline in the health of the Murray River, including the condition of these Icon sites.

“As a significant ecological asset of the Murray River, the forests have become a high priority for conservation and rehabilitation. Their rehabilitation and protection is supported

through The Living Murray process with funding and water allocations,” Heidi said.

North Central CMA manages the Flooding Enhancement of Gunbower Forest Project in close consultation with a range of stakeholders. The project aims to protect and enhance the ecological communities within the forest by investigating ways to enhance environmental values of the forest through environmental water deliveries, which mimic the natural flow of the Murray River.

“During spring 2005, environmental water was delivered to Gunbower Forest to maintain several permanent and semi-permanent wetland complexes, protect and enhance the river red gum communities and provide breeding opportunities for colonial water birds – with spectacular results,” Heidi reported.

Great news for the great egret

Field inspections identified a colonial waterbird breeding event in November 2005 and



The great egret bred at Gunbower last year for the first time since 1999/2000.

breeding for precious waterbirds

water was delivered until February 2006 to support the colony. This was the first significant breeding event of the great egret (*Ardea alba*) since 1999/2000. This species is listed under the Japan Australia Migratory Bird Agreement (JAMBA), China Australia Migratory Bird Agreement (CAMBA), *Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act 1988* and Bonn Conventions and is endangered in Victoria.

According to Heidi Magner, other significant bird species such as little pied cormorant, little black cormorant, white-necked heron, spoonbills, darters, Australian white ibis, the Australasian grebe and the white-bellied sea-eagle also utilised Gunbower Forest due to the watering.

New tree growth

"River red gum trees responded with flushes of new growth and some regeneration of understorey vegetation. It was noted that where environmental watering did not occur, trees still showed signs of leaf size reduction,

canopy thinning and die back. This highlights the importance of investigating ways to deliver water to these areas.

"Hundreds of records were made from several frog species including spotted marsh frog, barking marsh frog, peron's tree frog, pobblebonk, and plain froglet. The presence of juvenile frogs indicated that all species successfully bred in the flooded areas of the forest," Heidi said.

Environmental water used for the flooding in Gunbower Forest was provided through surplus flows, or unallocated water, and the existing Murray Flora and Fauna Water Entitlement.

North Central CMA has worked closely with the DSE, Goulburn-Murray Water and Parks Victoria to achieve these results.

For further information contact Brad Drust at North Central CMA on 5448 7124.

“

*Field inspections identified a colonial waterbird breeding event in November 2005 and water was delivered until February 2006 to support the colony. This was the first significant breeding event of the Great Egret (*Ardea alba*) since 1999/2000.*

”

Regional roundup

East Gippsland

East Gippsland Landcarers celebrated 20 years of success and achievement with a celebration dinner function attended by over 200 guests in September.

The evening included acknowledgement of country by respected community elder Auntie Phyllis Andy, backed up by the Gunai/Kurnai dance group who enthralled the crowd with several traditional dance ceremonies.

Twenty-seven Landcarers across eight categories were awarded small gifts and certificates. The evening was capped off with the premiere viewing of a documentary showcasing 20 years of Landcare in East Gippsland.

For further information contact Darren Williams on 5150 3575.

Wimmera

Project Platypus hosted a debate at their recent annual general meeting on the topic: is Landcare dying? Where will Landcare be in 20 years?

Project Platypus is a network of 11 Landcare groups in the Upper Wimmera Catchment. The community debate addressed common concerns and challenges facing Landcare including recruitment, volunteer dependency and ageing members.

It's no surprise in this case that the pro-Landcare team won the debate, but it's fair to say the opportunity to openly and seriously discuss the future of Landcare is one all groups and networks should encourage.

For further information contact Max Skeen on 5382 1544.

Glenelg Hopkins

Watershed 2000 held a very successful Enviro Expo as part of their recent ten-year celebrations. The program covered a variety of topics: how Landcare fits into the bigger picture, grassy groundcover restoration, dung beetles, balancing the soil health triangle, the broader implications of climatic change and on-farm salinity management. For more information on the expo contact Brenton Bartsch on 5562 6104.

Landcare groups are busy with spring weed control activities and plantings. A revegetation project is underway along the Merri River at Warnambool involving the Warnambool Coastcare Landcare Group, Glenelg Hopkins CMA, Warnambool City Council, Merrivale Primary School students and local community members. The Hopkins Moynes Landcare Group is involved in a Kids Caring 4 Catchments Project. The new Tarragal Landcare Group is developing a project proposal for a biodiversity seminar and planting project in 2007. The Branhholme Progress Association together with the Glenelg Hopkins CMA, Trust for Nature and DSE are working to raise money to protect and enhance a piece of swamp scrub in Branhholme.

For more information contact Shelley Lipscombe on 5571 2526.

North East

Landholders and community groups from across the North East region celebrated 20 Years of Landcare at a regional celebration in August.

The 2006 North East Landcare Awards were also announced at this event. The winners of the seven categories were: Agency Award – Rural City of Wangaratta, Community Group Award – Mudgegonga and District Landcare, Indigenous Landcare – Mungabareena Aboriginal Corporation (Wodonga), Individual Landcarer – Lyn Coulston, Koetong, Landcare Education – Beechworth Primary School, Nature Conservation – Baranduda Landcare Group, Sustainable Agriculture Award – the Humphry family, Springhurst.

More than thirty people with a combined involvement in Landcare of some 323 years

also received Active Service Awards. A posthumous award was made to Jack Jones from Mudgegonga Landcare Group. Jack was tragically killed earlier this year.

For further information contact Tom Croft on (02) 6043 7600.

North Central

20 Years of Landcare celebrations were held in St Arnaud in early September. Activities included a commemorative planting at Winjallock and a celebration dinner for over 200 Landcarers. The Baynton/Sirronia Landcare Group also held a 20 years celebration with a planting, guest speakers, training and pizza. Over 100 people attended.

Landcare week was busy across the region with membership drives, guest speakers, on-ground works and celebrations. Three new Landcare co-ordinators have been appointed in the Gannawarra, Mt Alexander/Macedon Ranges and Campaspe Shire Councils.

For further information contact Allison Long on 5440 1816.

West Gippsland

There were many Landcare highlights in West Gippsland for 2005-06. The Screw Creek is now completely fenced and excluded from stock and this will provide many benefits for Anderson Inlet.

According to our figures, 78% of the region Landcare groups rate their individual group health as moving forward, or better, suggesting Landcare is strong and healthy in the region.

“

Project Platypus hosted a debate at their recent annual general meeting on the topic: is Landcare dying? Where will Landcare be in 20 years?

”



The commemorative planting held at Winjallock in September – 20 years after the launch of Landcare on the site.



The 11 winners of the Port Phillip and Westernport CMA's 2006 Regional Landcare Awards celebrate their achievements at Federation Square in September.

One-third of groups have had projects running for less than 12 months while another third have projects that are of more than 5 years' duration. Fifty percent of Landcare groups have retained their membership over the past 12 months while a further 21% of groups have increased their membership.

For further information contact Phillip McGarry on 5662 4555.

Mallee

The successful Environmental Management and Action Planning Project (EMAPp) is underway in the area associated with the Tyrrell basin. Last year the EMAPp program helped 38 dryland farmers in the Manangatang, Sea Lake and Waitchie area develop a new vision for their properties. Project Manager Daryl Walters believes the EMAPp is a significant shift forward in sustainable land use for the Mallee and farmers have warmed to the opportunity to get involved.

The Mallee CMA is currently negotiating a part-time position for the Kooloonong Natya Landcare Group. It is envisaged this position will be based in the recently decommissioned DPI Piangil depot.

The Kooloonong Natya Landcare Group has initiated discussions to maintain the Piangil depot for the local community. As repairs to the site near completion, the Kooloonong Natya Landcare Group will begin the task of housing other community groups and organisations in the depot.

For more information contact Brendon Thomas on 5051 4385.

Goulburn Broken

Weeds and wine are the current flavours of the Goulburn Broken with several successful public workshops held recently.

A Regional Weed Roadshow is on tour.

The Euroa and Broadford events were each attended by over 80 people. Developed by local Landcare facilitators, the roadshow features trade displays and specialist presentations on grazing management of weeds, animal health, biological weed control and much more.

A Bottling Better Biodiversity: Environmental Growers Forum was held recently to engage local grape and olive growers with Landcare practices. Industry practitioners spoke on native cover crops, vegetation planning, bird management, and EMS. The day received a lot of positive feedback and more forums are now planned.

For more information contact Katie Brown on 5736 0103.

Corangamite

The Corangamite Landcare program farewelled Steve Smithyman from the Swan Bay Integrated Catchment Management Committee in September. During Steve's six years with the committee his dedication and easy-going nature was a fantastic combination in building community interest and involvement in the local region's natural resources.

The Corangamite Regional Landcare Forum will be held on 30-31 March 2007. This will provide community Landcarers with a chance to meet

new people who share a passion for Landcare, catch up with old friends and Landcare networks, explore and learn from Landcare's successes and failures and share ideas on making Landcare even stronger in the future.

For registration details please contact Lucas Oram on 5232 9100.

Port Phillip and Westernport

Over 200 people gathered at Federation Square in Melbourne for the Port Phillip and Westernport CMA's 2006 Regional Landcare Awards in September.

The Landcarers were welcomed to country by Auntie Joy Murphy-Wandin, senior elder of the Wurundjeri people. Fifty-seven community groups, 10 local governments and five schools were represented amongst the audience.

David Buntine, Chief Executive Officer of the Port Phillip and Westernport CMA, provided a snapshot of the catchment management challenges facing the region, followed by Dr Jim Cavaye from Queensland University with a presentation on fostering vibrant community groups that emphasised the leadership and membership challenges facing Landcare.

The winners of the regional Landcare awards were then announced by Mrs Jan de Kretser, wife of Professor David de Kretser, AC, Governor of Victoria.

For further information contact Doug Evans on 9296 4662.



Sure Gro's™ Spring Sale

Freecall
1800 643 384

Spring means planting and SureGro has some exclusive offers to care for the environment

REVEGETATION 350 TREE GUARD SETS

Set Includes

1 x Guard

450mm height x 350mm lay flat width x 100µm thick. Carton Qty 500. Life expectancy minimum 18 months.

3 x Stakes

750mm long x 10-12mm diameter Bales of 500.

	Ex GST	Inc GST
Option 1: 5,000 + sets	37¢	40.7¢
Option 2: 3,000 + sets	39¢	42.9¢
Option 3: 500 + sets	41¢	45.1¢

Hardwood Stakes available at an additional cost per set

Set Includes

1 x Guard

450mm height x 400mm lay flat width x 120µm thick.

Carton Qty 333, Life expectancy minimum 2 years.

3 x Stakes

750mm long x 11-13mm diameter. Bales of 500.

	Ex GST	Inc GST
Option 4: 5,000 + sets	64¢	70.4¢
Option 5: 3,000 + sets	69¢	75.9¢
Option 6: 500 + sets	75¢	82.5¢



NOTE: 750mm long x 11-13 diam. bamboo stakes available at 6¢ ex gst extra per set

HIGH PERFORMANCE TREE GUARD SETS

CORFLUTE SETS

WEED MATS

Set Includes

Quick fold no assembly

1 x Guard

450mm height x 200mm triangle(quick fold)

1 x Hardwood Stake

75cm x 18mm x 25mm

1 x surejute mat or suregro recycled fibre mat

370mm x 370mm

Ex GST Inc GST

\$1.28 \$1.408

per set

Recycled Paper Weed Mats 380mm diameter

Packs of 100 Mats 33¢ each ex GST

36.3¢ inc GST

Surejute Weed Mats

Approx 370mm x 370mm

Packs of 100 Mats 38¢ each ex GST

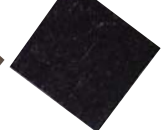
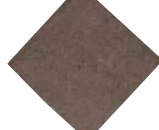
41.8¢ inc GST

Recycled Fibre Weed Mats

Approx 370mm x 370mm

Packs of 100 Mats 35¢ each ex GST

38.5¢ inc GST



2 LITRE MILK CARTON TREE GUARD SETS

Set Includes

1 x 2 Litre Milk Carton Tree Guard

300mm height, 95mm x 95mm square, with stake perforations. Pack of 500 Milk Carton tree Guards

2 x Bamboo Stakes

600mm long x 8-10mm diameter.

	Ex GST	Inc GST
Bales of 1000 stakes	31¢	34.1¢
Option 7: 500 + sets	27¢	29.7¢
Option 8: 3,000 + sets	11¢	12.1¢

1 Litre generic milk carton (guard only)

Please note Suregro Milk Carton Tree Guards are purpose made with stake perforations.



FERTILIZERS AND WATER CRYSTALS

Typhoon Tablets

10gm Box of 1000.

20gm Box of 500.

	Ex GST	Inc GST
Slow Release min 12 months	\$74.50	\$81.95



Water Crystals

	Ex GST	Inc GST
25 Kilo	\$320	\$352
10 Kilo	\$160	\$176
1 Kilo	\$20	\$22



EROSION CONTROL MATTING

SureJute Thick Mat Roll (Covers 45m2)

1.83m wide x 25m long - 800gm/m2

	Ex GST	Inc GST
1-10 rolls	\$80.00	\$88.00
10+	\$75.00	\$82.50

SureGro Recycled Fibre Roll

1.8m w x 50m long-350gm/m2 covers (90m2)

	Ex GST	Inc GST
1.8m w x 50m long-350gm/m2 covers (120m2)	\$170	\$187

	Ex GST	Inc GST
2.4m w x 50m long-350gm/m2 covers (120m2)	\$220	\$242

Note: Suregro recycled fibre matting is needle punched only to allow easy water penetration



All orders must be paid for in full prior to dispatch or where agreed in writing. All prices quoted are Ex. Factory and include GST.

Sure Gro has negotiated favourable rates with interstate carriers. Orders must be received on or before 10/11/2006 and will be processed in order of receipt. Normal Trading Terms And Conditions Apply. **NOTE: Freight is an additional charge which will include GST.**

375 gram Granular AquaBoost AG100 Water Crystal with every order

Free!

Unit 1/42-44 Garden Blvd DINGLEY VIC 3172 Phone: (03) 9558 1060

Fax: (03) 9558 0505 Email: sales@suregro.com Web: www.suregro.com

OFFER ENDS 31/11/06