



Network News



Newsletter of the Wedderburn Conservation Management Network – April 2012

Conserving Biodiversity

The things you can see from the car!

Why should you carry a camera with you while travelling? Travelling the Calder highway on a regular basis has provided opportunities to observe the changes in nature along the route. Right now the Grey box trees are flowering in profusion. It makes it quite easy to distinguish a grey box tree from any others. You may also notice the dense creeper known as Snoddy gobble is very green and in several places south of Wedderburn it is stretching from the top of the host tree right down to the ground.

Ever watchful while travelling at a modest speed on an unsealed road, a Bearded Dragon was sighted basking on the road. We were safely able to stop and admire the reptile, and of course take photos out of the car window.



Returning home at 10pm one night a Barn Owl was observed perched on a fence post right beside the track. This beautiful and striking bird was well illuminated by the car headlights and stayed on the post for several minutes to be observed. Attempts to photograph the owl did not prove successful in this case.

Road travel also provides opportunities to observe pest animals such as common Mynahs, and allow these sightings to be reported to agencies that are collecting data on the spread of these birds.

On a recent trip to Swan hill when the weather hot and dry the challenge of the journey was to count the number of raptors (birds of prey) sighted. There were many perched on power poles which made them easy to spot, but from the moving car, not easy to identify.

Even when you are restricted to observing as a passenger in a moving car, there is always something interesting in the passing environment to take note of, and always have a camera handy just in case!

Photograph – Bearded Dragon, Annette Robertson

Wedderburn Conservation Management Network “Observers”

Nardoo Creek gets some attention

Friday 23 March saw the utilisation of NCCMA 25th Anniversary of Landcare grant to work on Nardoo Creek in Wedderburn.

A considerable variety of local indigenous plant species were provided to plant in the areas that had space available.

The support of the Wedderburn Lions Club was appreciated.

Their task was to provide a BBQ lunch, as well as tea and coffee during the morning. Once they were set up, some members pitched in and helped with the planting until their food was required. Loddon Shire had a truck available to take green waste, and the Parks Vic recycling trailer was also available.



It was pleasing to find so little rubbish to put into the trailer. Wedderburn CFA assisted by providing water pumped to the newly planted seedlings.

The workers made steady progress on the planting throughout the morning and the threatening weather changed frequently, with only a few brief showers which did not stop the activity.

During the morning a few locals and their dogs walking along the creek saw the activity and took some interest in the project. It will be worthwhile to periodically have a look at the site to check on how the plants are growing. Article by Annette Robertson

Alison Pouliot Fungi Workshops

The Wedderburn CMN will again be hosting the extremely popular fungi workshops run by internationally renowned fungi conservationist Alison Pouliot. There will be two workshops held at the Parks Vic Depot Inglewood as indicated below.

Saturday 02 June 2012 Fungi workshop: *Fungi – An Introduction to a Curious Kingdom*

Fungi - An introduction to a curious kingdom workshop will introduce participants to the diversity and curiosities of the fungi kingdom. This workshop includes an interactive and illustrated seminar addressing the major fungal groups, the basics of fungus identification, fungal ecology, natural and cultural history of fungi, followed by an exciting foray in local forests to search for species of interest. Many fungal specimens from the local area will be displayed, discussed and examined during the workshop. Participants will be provided with supplementary notes.



Workshop Summary

Sunday 03 June 2012 Fungi workshop:

The Bizarre & the beautiful – A Deeper Exploration of a Curious Kingdom

This workshop will take participants deeper into the fungi kingdom with a closer look at the major characteristics used to identify fungi in the field. We'll also explore some of the evolutionary peculiarities that have resulted in fungi being such a strange and intriguing group. This workshop includes an illustrated seminar, a display of local specimens, an interactive specimen identification session and a foray into local forests. Participants are encouraged to bring along specimens for the identification session and will also be provided with supplementary notes.

It is not necessary to have done *The Fungi – An Introduction to a Curious Kingdom* to do *The Bizarre & the beautiful – A Deeper Exploration of a Curious Kingdom*, but ideally you'd be familiar with the main features of a mushroom that are used to identify fungi in the field.

Further information can be obtained from Alison's website. Details of individual workshops will be sent to participants closer to the event.

http://www.alisonpouliot.com/projects_fungi_ecology.php

Cost of a **workshop**: WCMN members - \$10, non-members - \$20

Contact Michael Moore

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End of Season for the Malleefowl Camera Program

The malleefowl monitoring program using non – invasive cameras mounted over an active mound in the Wychitella Nature Conservation Reserve has come to an end for this breeding season. Peter Watts, pictured aside, has packed up his equipment until the next season starts around September. Peter



has recorded a tremendous amount of information on the breeding behaviour of the birds including marked changes in behaviour as the season progressed. Information such as the number of eggs laid and a good estimate of the number of chicks hatched has been obtained and many animal visitors to the mound have been filmed.

New Landcare Facilitator for the Loddon Plains Landcare Network

The Loddon Plains Landcare Network (LPLN) recently received funding from the Victorian Government's Local Landcare Facilitator Initiative to contribute to the salary of a facilitator for the Network. After the process of receiving applications and conducting interviews the LPLN selected their new Landcare Facilitator at the end of February 2012.

The Loddon Plains Landcare Network is happy to announce that Anthony Gallacher has commenced in his role as the new Landcare Facilitator. Anthony brings to his role a scientific background in conservation and environmental science. He also brings substantial volunteer experience from his time with the Australian Youth Climate Coalition.

Anthony will be assisting the 14 member groups of the LPLN in developing and implementing projects that enhance the natural resources within the network area. This will include helping with strategic planning, funding applications, sourcing relevant information and promoting the work of the network and member groups.

Anthony is currently working on completing the biodiversity "Blueprint for Action" and helping to organise a series of community workshops for the network in early May. If you'd like find out more about the network or Landcare contact Anthony:

Email: anthony.gallacher@gmail.com , Phone: (03) 5446 9



Community Workshops to Identify Local Environmental Assets

The Loddon Plains Landcare Network (LPLN) – a network of 14 different Natural Resource Management groups located across the northern part of the Loddon Shire, including the Wedderburn CMN – will be, as mentioned above, organising community workshops to encourage members of the general community to come forward and share their knowledge of local environmental assets that they consider to be of value and want to see conserved or managed in such a way as to ensure their existence and wellbeing into the future. At these workshops people will be encouraged to add such information, in the form of notes, map references, word of mouth etc to information already gathered by the LPLN. The information gathered will then be used by the LPLN for future planning in the above mentioned "Blueprint for Action" As part of these workshops a representative of the North Central Catchment Management Authority will also be talking about future environmental plans and funding that will help to bring these plans to fruition.

Workshop 1

Wednesday 2 May, Wedderburn Community Centre

Workshop 2

Wednesday 9 May, Serpentine Bowling Club

Workshop 3

Wednesday 16 May, Dingee East Loddon P-12 College

All workshops will run from 7.00 – 9.00 pm with supper provided

Full details of the workshops can be obtained from Anthony Gallacher – see article above or viewed on the WCMN blog – see details at the end of the newsletter.

Paper Wasps

We have been entertained off and on for the last few days watching paper wasps making a nest under the eaves of the house. There seems to be a common flight path to and from the nest which involves a trip along the power cable – I wonder if someone can inform me as to why they do this. Their efforts however came to naught when we found the nest lying on the ground empty, the local ants had had a feast– see photograph of nest.



Facts courtesy of CSIRO

Paper wasps belong to the insect order Hymenoptera. They can be found across mainland south-eastern Australia and in southern Western Australia. Paper wasps are social insects and make their nests of grey papery material by mixing saliva and wood fibres. Paper wasps are a social wasp consisting of small colonies of 12-20 individuals. Adult wasps feed on nectar and make ‘paper’ nests by mixing saliva and wood fibres.

Nests are a nursery where larvae are kept one to each cell. The larvae are fed on chewed-up caterpillars caught by the adults. The cells are then capped and the larvae pupate.

Michael Moore

2012 National Soils Forum – Farming for Sustainable Soils Rural Finance field trip to the Loddon Plains.

The field trip provided a variety of examples of farming applications for Sustainable soils practice. All properties visited had faced the added challenge of flooding in the mix of changing their practices.

At Andrew Bissett’s property, we viewed stubble management to improve soil health with stubble retention. Soil Moisture monitoring was also demonstrated and discussed, and we were able to inspect the air seeder that Andrew has utilised to the best advantage for his soils. As an agronomist Andrew demonstrated heaps of technical knowhow and how he had modified his practices based on current research.

The historic East Loddon Woolshed was the lunch venue, and the tour of the shed took us back to years gone by. It is certainly an interesting piece of working architecture and of particular historical significance to the district.

Karl Hooke’s property highlighted methods for increasing groundcover and reducing wind erosion, by tree planting to provide shelter for paddocks and reduce wind erosion. We viewed a paddock on the Loddon River which had been significantly damaged by flooding. Water remained on paddock for 3 weeks and killed all the groundcover, leaving what was described as a moonscape. This property also has a site of Box gum grassy woodland that will soon be fenced.

Garry and Kaye Addlems property (also significantly affected by persisting flood waters) demonstrated inter row cropping as a management tool to improve soil health by Lucerne sown into barley stubble.

This field trip provided a diverse snapshot of the challenges facing farmers in the district to maintain and improve soil health, and the considerable number of different tools and methods which can be utilised through involvement in the Farming for Sustainable Soils program.

Annette Robertson



The WCMN is a network including interested individuals and both public and private land managers who come together to promote a shared aim. That shared aim is to work with the community in general to promote profitable, productive and sustainable human enterprises while conserving and indeed enhancing the biodiversity of their area of interest.

For further information concerning any items in this newsletter or other aspects of the WCMN contact **WCMN ranger, Wendy Murphy - 0438384053**
WCMN President, Michael Moore – 54943542

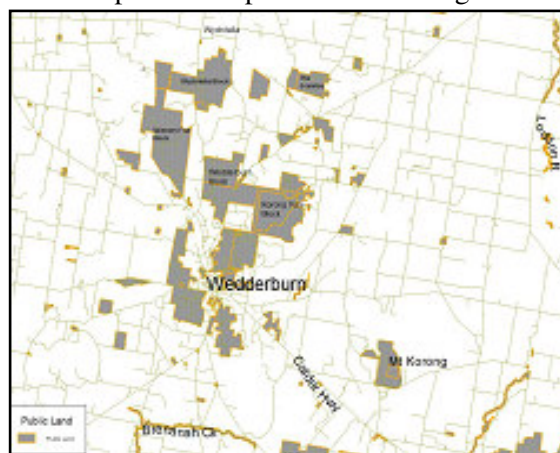
Website addresses

<http://mc2.vicnet.net.au/home/january/web/index.html>

<http://wedderburncmnnews.blogspot.com/>

<http://lplnnews.blogspot.com/>

LPLN- Loddon Plains Landcare Network



The WCMN Area of Interest

‘Proudly supported by the Victorian Government Landcare Grants Program’.