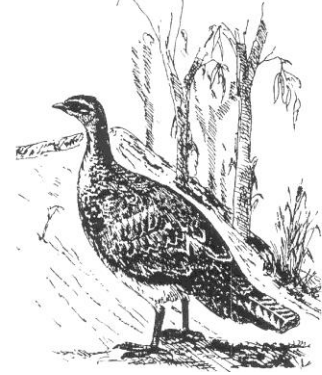




Network News



Newsletter of the Wedderburn Conservation Management Network – March 2017

Conserving Biodiversity

The Soaks project and citizen science

Paul Foreman has now run two soak monitoring workshops for members of the WCMN, Mt Korong Eco Watch Grp, Friends of Kooyoora & Loddon Plains Landcare Network to attend, funded by the Norman Wettenhall Foundation. These citizen science workshops aim to build capacity within the local community, giving them the knowledge and ability to look after significant aspects of their local environment. This is critical for ensuring the protection of the soaks. The next stage of the Spring Soaks Projects will be to gather evidence that shows the importance of controlling grazing pressure on the Community and hence to continue to fence out soaks on public & private land. The *North Western Goldfields Intermittent Soak Community* has now been approved for FFG Listing by the FFG Scientific Advisory Committee, thanks to the efforts of Paul Foreman, the WCMN, Friends of Kooyoora, MKEW and LPLN. This is a fantastic example of how a local community has rallied together to identify, recognise & protect a highly significant ecosystem in their landscape. They are now calling for EVC mapping to be updated to include this newly recognised vegetation type.

Article and photographs by Kirsten Hutchinson of Trust for Nature



The Kooyoora Connections Project

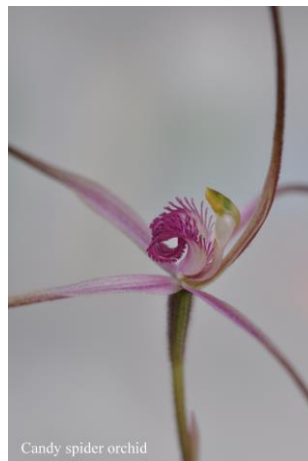
PROJECT ACHIEVEMENTS TO DATE

(Activities completed 1 July 2013 to 28 February 2017)

- Four TfN conservation covenants established, totalling 372 hectares.
- One cultural heritage assessment undertaken.
- 627 participants have attended 13 community engagement events.
- 100 participants have attended 10 working group meetings.
- 14.2 kilometres of fencing has been completed, protecting 483 hectares of vegetation from stock grazing.
- 417 foxes have been killed in an ongoing baiting program across the Wychitella NCR
- 275 Yellow-lip Spider Orchid's successfully established in the wild*.
- **Mapping, surveys, and site selection** undertaken for planned reintroductions of Robust Greenhood and Candy Spider Orchid*.
- 243 hectares of revegetation completed over 6 sites with 1,390 seedlings planted and 170 kilograms of seed sown
- 1,380 hectares of priority weed control (Wheel Cactus and African Lovegrass)

The aim of the project is to make it easier for our threatened species to move through the district to find new habitat and to lower the risk of extinctions. The program achieves this by protecting the good bits of native bush that still remain, add new bits of woodland by revegetation and by taking out the high threat of weeds and feral animals.

Kooyoora Connections has attracted attention from representatives of the federal government who have come out to inspect the works on numerous occasions. Their feedback has been very positive and they have expressed satisfaction with investing the money in our district. This sets us up nicely for additional projects in the future. A particular good result of this project is that the two of the last remaining patches of Buloke woodland in the Wedderburn district are now protected and are being restored. This means that this iconic and typically Australian type of bush can now be preserved for future generations and that the threatened species associated with the Buloke are less likely to disappear from Wedderburn forever. Cactus eradication work around Mt Egbert (The Granites) has been very successful. Only a few years ago the Wheel Cactus was spreading very quickly throughout that area, with entire roadsides covered and many hundreds of hectares of both conservation land as well as agricultural land rendered worthless. The Kooyoora Connections program kick-started major operations by contractors as well as many local residents to take this species out of the landscape. The work along the roadsides and inside the Mt Egbert block of the Wychitella Nature Conservation Reserve



Candy spider orchid



pterostylis valida



View from Mt Egbert

(NCR) was carried out by the work crews of the local indigenous DjaDjaWurrung. While they were busy killing the cactus they discovered more and more cultural heritage sites inside the park and their attention on this part of their country is another positive spin-off of the project. Dja DjaWurrung will now undertake careful planning with Parks Victoria on the management of all these newly discovered sites. Without the Kooyoora Connections Program we could not have revegetated the cleared land on our new Lawan block near Wychitella and therefore could not have started on reconnecting this land with the rest of the Wedderburn bush for the rare birds and other animals we still see hanging on here. In fact I doubt we would have even bought this new block of ours at all were it not for this project.

Text by Jeroen Van Veen, Bush Heritage Australia

Table of achievements: Britt Gregory, North Central Catchment management Authority

Farewell to the Green Army



The above photographs and the list below gives some idea of the work carried out by the 2016 Green Army Team. All very much appreciated by the project managers involved with the team – well done guys!

- Line searching for malleefowl mounds
- Direct Seeding around 16 mounds
- Direct Seeding in the contour bands at the Restoration of a De-commissioned Eucalyptus Harvesting site
- Plant ID in preparation for seed collecting for the malleefowl project
- Collection of approximately 40 kg of seed for future project work
- Cactus stem injecting at Mt Buckrabanyule
- Cactus biological-control, spreading Cochineal Scale beetle larvae at Mt Buckrabanyule
- Hand weeding of Brassica sp. from a sensitive conservation zone at a Burabungle conservation property adjacent to Mt Korong.

- Assisting in completing a “threatened species and understory plants” Nursery Greenhouse at the Korong Ridge conservation estate
- Placing of 25 x 20 litre pitfall reptile traps along 5 transects, throughout the Korong Ridge conservation estate.
- Exclusion fencing of threatened grass species, Jericho Wire Grass (*Aristida jerichoensis*) at the Korong Ridge conservation estate
- Removal of old fences and re-erecting a fence to create exclusion plots for native flora species
- Hand weeding of Patterson’s curse

Article by Michael Moore and James Nelsson (Loddon Plains Landcare Network Landcare Facilitator)

What is next for our newsletter?

The costs of printing and distributing this newsletter have gone up this year. So much so that we are forced to make a difficult decision. On the one hand we don’t want to lose contact with you, and the newsletter serves as a great introduction to conservation work in the Wedderburn area, but on the other hand we don’t want to spend too much money on this publication as that would take away from our valuable work with the threatened plant and animal species we are committed to protect.

We therefore need to ask you about your continued interest in receiving this newsletter. Are you able to switch to reading it on the internet only? Can you do without the newsletter full stop? How valuable do you think this newsletter is in getting more people involved in the conservation cause in Wedderburn? What would change for you if this newsletter was no longer delivered to your door? Should we charge for our newsletter or would that estrange our readership from the Network?

We would really like to hear your opinion so that it is easier for us to make the right decision on the future of this newsletter. Please forward your ideas, remarks, complaints and other contributions to the address or email below. A phone call would also work.

Notices - see public information session above

Please note that you can receive this newsletter by email, contact Michael Moore as below. All newsletters are available for reading on the WCMN website.

Please note that 2016-17 membership fees are now due and can be paid via the WCMN website.

Individual membership \$5 Family membership \$10.

Payment may be sent to:

**WCMN Treasurer
PO Box 65
Wedderburn 3518
Victoria**

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 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 President, Michael Moore – 54943542

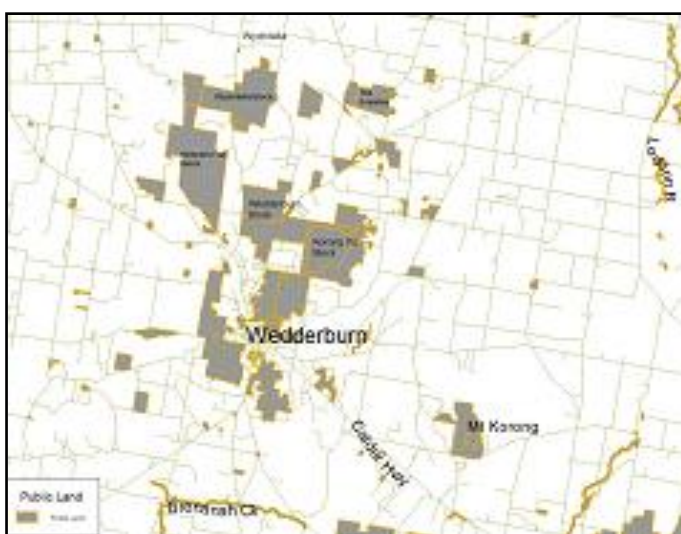
Website addresses

www.wedderburncmn.org

www.lpln.org.

LPLN- Loddon Plains Landcare Network

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The WCMN Area of Interest