



# Network News



Newsletter of the Wedderburn Conservation Management Network – March 2014

Conserving Biodiversity

## Duke of Edinburgh Award Students and Environmental Activities

A number of Duke of Edinburgh Award students from Wedderburn College have opted to involve themselves in environmental activities associated with the work of the Wedderburn CMN (WCMN) and the Loddon Plains Landcare Network (LPLN). The involvement of the students in these activities has been the result of discussions held between teachers at the college and representatives of both environmental organizations. Discussions have aimed at exploring ways in which the WCMN and the LPLN can assist teachers in fulfilling the environmental requirements of the school curriculum in terms of such aspects as biodiversity and sustainability. Early this year, after consideration of the school curriculum, teachers submitted a list of areas and ideas that they considered as potentially fruitful areas of mutual interaction. These areas included such things as; involvement in a nest box project, planting native plants at the school, helping out with elective units concerning sustainability, providing speakers to talk about plants, a bush audit and the Duke of Edinburgh award scheme.



The WCMN and the LPLN have begun by involving the five Duke of Edinburgh award students in such activities as attending the WCMN monthly meeting where possible projects for the students were discussed, building nest boxes and having a look at the WCMN's project for restoring a decommissioned eucalyptus harvesting area. Students Laura Van De Wetering and Jamie Bushnell have agreed to take on the roll of reporting the activities that the student will participate in.

Article Michael Moore

Photograph by Jude Raftis, -WCMN meeting with students Laura and Jamie attending

## Eucalyptus harvesting site restoration project

This project, which is located at a site along the Old Boort road Wedderburn is progressing well. The strategy to restore the site, described by the WCMN's consultant ecologist as a highly dysfunctional landscape, comprises three elements.

***1 Hold up more moisture in the landscape*** to reduce run-off and increase infiltration. Using either a machine (tractor mounted) or manual methods (brush cutters), create a succession of water flow impeding barriers by cutting the eucalypts along a series of parallel bands (2-3m wide every 10 to 20 m) and then lay the cut stems ('brush') along the contour.



**2 Incorporate organic matter**, initially using indigenous tussock grasses (Wallaby-grasses) colonisers. To enhance the banded vegetation effect, it is proposed to shallow rip immediately upslope of the brush bands to increase water infiltration and permeability rates and therefore improve water capture (and availability to plants) in the immediate downslope area.

**3 Establish a cohort of shrubs and robust perennial low lying plants** as the basis of the eventual reconstructed understorey. Once the brush banding is established, the next step is to introduce suitable vegetation.



To date the project's Operations and Environmental Management Plan has been developed. Treatment areas (15ha in total) and a non-treatment control area (1.2ha) have been delineated. Monitoring transect lines (15 of 50m length) have been set up throughout both the treatment and non-treatment control areas. Twenty volunteers, including fourteen students from Bendigo TAFE have been involved in pre-treatment monitoring of seven of the transects. The final eight transect lines will be completed on the 26<sup>th</sup> March. Five Duke of Edinburgh Award students from Wedderburn College have visited the site to make themselves aware of the purpose of the project.

Quotes are being sought from relevant organizations and private contractors to assess the most cost effective method of proceeding with the restoration strategy above.

Article and photographs Michael Moore

Photographs in the article, top - volunteers ready to start work,

middle – transect line monitoring, bottom – Duke of Edinburgh award students being shown the monitoring process.



### **Nest boxes for Kids Program, Loddon Plains Landcare Network (LPLN)**

The Nestboxes for Kids program brings Landcare, Men's Sheds, and schools together in a collaborative community based conservation project. The project is coordinated by the local Landcare Facilitator of the Loddon Plains Landcare Network, Anthony Gallacher.

The program began with a pilot involving the Bridgewater-Inglewood Men's Shed, Bridgewater Primary School and the Landcare Network and has now spread to Wedderburn.

The LPLN is working with the Wedderburn Men's Shed on the construction of a number of nestboxes. A number of Duke of Edinburgh award students have been working on making the nestboxes under the guidance of members of the Men's Shed and Wedderburn College primary students will be involved in hands on education sessions in Term 2 as part of their Biological Sciences curriculum. The session will involve looking at the different types of nestboxes



produced by the Men's Shed such as rosella, kookaburra, possum, bat and pardalote boxes. Amongst other things, the students will learn about the correct positioning of nestboxes and the right sized trees all in the context of their local environment and will get a chance for some hands on painting of the nestboxes.

Nestboxes will be erected at the Hardhills Reserve and other sites around Wedderburn.

The East Loddon P-12 College will also be undertaking their own Nestboxes for Kids project, with their grade 6 woodwork class building nestboxes thanks to funds for materials from the Network's Loddon Shire Community Grant.

Article – Anthony Gallacher and Michael Moore. Photograph Rick Raftis

# Geology and Geomorphology of the Kooyoora area

*This is a rare opportunity to spend a day with renowned geomorphologist, Neville Rosengren, to learn about the geological history of some of our local landforms such as Mt Korong, Kooyoora and the Sunday Morning Hills.*

*Neville will begin the day at the Inglewood Senior Citizens Centre with a presentation on the nature, origin and dynamics of landscapes in the local area. This will be followed by a bus tour where we will visit several sites of geological and geomorphological significance.*

**Lunch and transport will be provided.**

**Bring sunscreen, hat, sturdy walking shoes and a water bottle.**

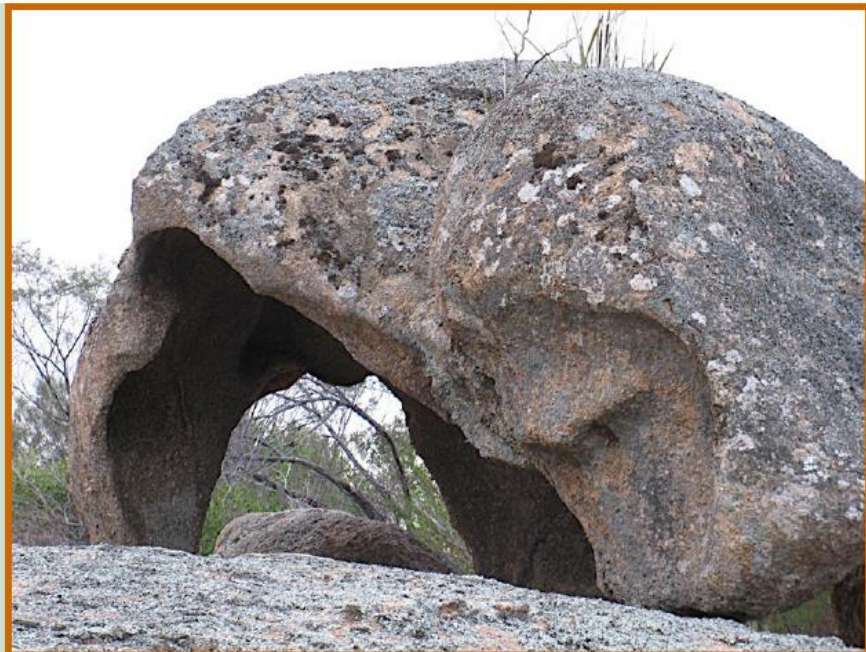
**WHEN:** Sunday, April 13th,  
10am—4pm

**WHERE:** Inglewood Senior  
Citizens Centre,  
75 Grant St, Inglewood.

**Bookings are essential as  
numbers are strictly limited.**

**RSVP to Kirsten Hutchison  
By the 1st of April.**

**Ph 0459168865  
kirstenh@tfn.org.au**



Photograph taken by Kate Lee

Wedderburn



Australian Government



**NORTH CENTRAL**  
Catchment Management Authority

*Connecting Rivers, Landscapes, People*



*This event is supported by the North Central Catchment Management Authority, through funding from the Australian Government.*

## Landcare Group begins integrated cactus management

The Wychitella District Landcare Group has begun a trial of a new biological control agent as part of a new push for integrated weed control of Wheel Cactus (*Opuntia robusta*) in the Wychitella area.

Released on Mt Buckrabanyule in late January, the biological control agent is a cochineal scale insect that has had success in inhibiting growth of the Wheel Cactus in South Australia.

The cochineal insects were sourced from the Tarrengower Cactus Control Committee at Maldon, who have three release sites for the bug. The bug is just one of several methods used by the “Cactus Warriors” from Maldon, including the highly effective stem injection with glyphosate and physical removal of small cacti.

The Wychitella District Landcare Group is working with the Loddon Plains Landcare Network and the North Central Catchment Management Authority to develop strategies for tackling this weed.

“While the viability of the cochineal insect as a biological control for Wheel Cactus in this part of the country is unknown, it is clear that an integrated approach to tackle infestations of cacti is required, as is the case with many weed species” said Anthony Gallacher, Landcare Facilitator, Loddon Plains Landcare Network.

The group will monitor the progress and spread of the insect and if successful, will look at release outside of the current trial site.

If you are interested in hearing more or would like to get involved in fighting Wheel Cactus, please contact Anthony Gallacher, 0447 095 501 or [facilitator@lpln.org](mailto:facilitator@lpln.org).

Photo caption: Release of the cochineal scale insect at Mt Buckrabanyule, with infested pads pinned to healthy Wheel Cactus plants.



## Notice

**Please note that 2013-14 membership fees are now due.**  
**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

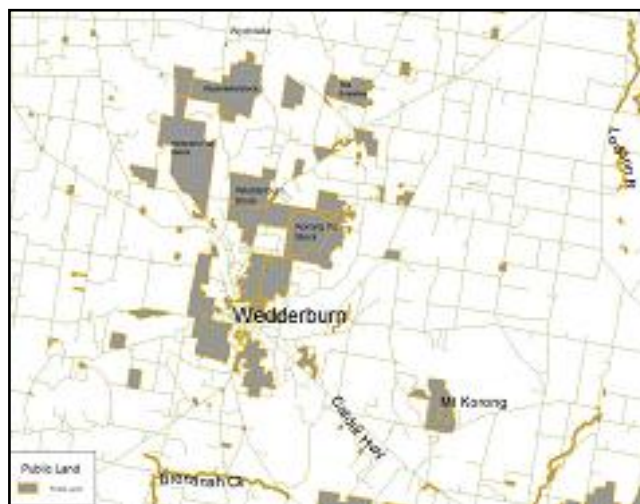
[www.wedderburncmn.org](http://www.wedderburncmn.org)

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

[www.lpln.org](http://www.lpln.org).

LPLN- Loddon Plains Landcare Network

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



The WCMN Area of Interest



**NORTH CENTRAL**  
Catchment Management Authority  
*Connecting Rivers, Landscapes, People*



CARING  
FOR  
OUR  
COUNTRY