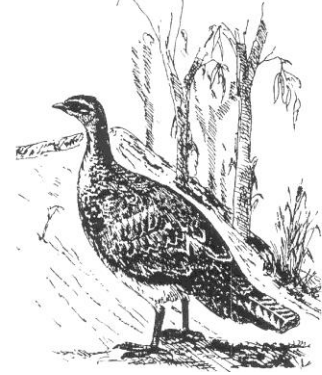




Network News



Newsletter of the Wedderburn Conservation Management Network – November 2016

Conserving Biodiversity

Wedderburn CMN double success for the Soaks project

I am pleased to announce a double success for the Ephemeral Spring Soaks project that the Wedderburn CMN has been working on over the last couple years. The project “*Protecting spring soaks in the north western Goldfields*” was initially successful in gaining funding to the tune of \$50,000 from the Communities for Nature 2014 - Small to medium grants programme. The key aims of the project were raising community awareness, on-ground conservation (mostly planting, fencing), baseline assessment monitoring and nomination of the ecological community under the FFG Act 1999. Close to



the end of the project the nomination for Flora and Fauna Guarantee Status (FFG Status) for these rare and endangered ecological communities was submitted to the Scientific Advisory Committee of the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning and we have now been made aware of the success of this nomination. The soaks now have this endangered community status which means that they warrant special consideration whereas prior to the project they were neglected as a special ecological community. The communities now rejoice officially under the new name of the *The Intermittent Soaks of the North Western Goldfields*. Work done to date on the soaks has been done in dry conditions while these communities are only active and come into their own in very wet years such as 2016.

Following on from the above nomination success the Wedderburn CMN made an application to the Norman Wettenhall Foundation under their Citizen Science Grants for follow up work on the project – this application has been successful. Funding obtained will enable members of the Wedderburn CMN, Friends of Kooyoora and the Mt Korong Eco – Watch Group continue with activities which will include; community education focusing on the soaks during a wet phase, plant identification, ecosystem function and conservation management. This year represents an increasingly rare event when a spatially restricted (threatened community) is in its active phase. We hope to see a range of rare ephemeral aquatic and semi-aquatic herbs including: Common Pipewort *Eriocaulon scariosum* (below left) and Narrow Goodenia *Goodenia macbarronii* (below right)





Kate Lee of the Mt Korong Eco-Watch group who has two soaks on her property at Mt Korong and has spent time monitoring these and others said “It’s been a great winter/spring for the Ephemeral soaks around Mt Korong, and under the guidance of consultant botanist, Paul Foreman, our group has been photographing and identifying emerging plant species on 4 ephemeral soaks (two on private land and two on Mt Korong NCR). It will be interesting to see what a difference the 2 recently constructed exclosures make to the soaks vegetation into the future”.

The Wedderburn CMN will be arranging a field trip as part of the upcoming project activities – look out for the flyer – we are keen to let *locals* especially realise what is on their doorsteps.

Article and photographs Michael Moore and Paul Foreman

Mt Korong Eco – Watch group progress

Short Storey Nursery

MKEW has had a positive few months, with our under-storey nursery now up and running after some delay because of access problems (boggy tracks) following our huge September rains.

The nursery is filling up fast and now has an automated watering system installed. All species in the hothouse are grown from local seed or cuttings.

The latest additions are three trays of *Aristida jerichoensis* or Jericho Wire Grass, a threatened grass species we hope to re-establish at Mt Korong.

On Sunday 4th December at 11am we will have a nursery launch and morning tea.

Thanks to Michael Moore and WCMN for acting as sponsors of MKEW by administering the Victorian Government Threatened Species grant that made our nursery possible.

Feral Animal Control

Thanks to Trudy Nelsson’s application MKEW has also been successful in obtaining a further Threatened Species grant for fox, cat and rabbit control and monitoring on Korong Ridge Conservation estate in 2017.

The rabbit control will coincide with the Australia-wide release of the new Calicivirus K5 in March 2017.

Thanks to Paul Dettman for contributing a further \$2000 to the project.

Article and photograph – Kate Lee

Understory planting a success

The WCMN has been a fantastic support for the Mt Korong Eco-Watch (MKEW), last year it sponsored MKEW for two Threatened Species Protection Initiative grants. One of these grants has just been finalised, it involved the planting of over 5000 indigenous understory shrubs, herbs and grasses in a remnant Grey Box woodland. The site had a depauperate understory, resulting from years of sheep grazing. This revegetation project was undertaken through a series of different planting days, undertaken by volunteers, including school students from Aquinas College in Ringwood, MKEW members and individuals.



In preparation for the planting days, and to ensure the success of this project, we pre-drilled the holes for the plants in the hard granitic sands of the sites. This task was completed by several MKEW members, over many days, and wore down many auger drill bits. The effort was worth it, and when the volunteers turned up for the planting, the difficult part was already done, and they could get about the enjoyable part of planting the understory. We managed to successfully get all the plants in the ground.

As part of our preparation, we set up a series of 1,000 litre water cubes, this was to allow us to water the plants, and to nurse them through the dryer months. Due to the unusually wet winter and spring, these have proved to be unnecessary. The planting success this year has been amazing, with a greater than 90% survival rate of the plants. Ironically, most of the plants that we lost was due to a low lying part of the planting area becoming flooded by the rains, and remaining inundated for over a month.



Another part of this project was the planting of over 450 Jericho Wire grass (*Aristida jerichoensis*) plugs. Once



established, they are ideal at slowing the movement of water flowing over scarred and eroding ground. So these plants will make a great contribution to rehabilitating the degraded site that was selected and the site will contribute to the preservation of this threatened species. All in all, a fantastic result.

Article and photographs – James Nelsson

Wedderburn CMN Malleefowl Threatened species Project

As noted by the articles above it can be seen that the two Wedderburn CMN sponsored threatened species projects being carried out by the Mount Korong Eco-watch group have been making great progress. The current malleefowl project is likewise rapidly reaching a successful conclusion. The Green Army team of young people, including four young people recruited from the local area, have been involved to date in 35 systematic line searches of selected areas in the Wychitella Nature Conservation Reserve for malleefowl mounds. We have found all malleefowl mounds in the selected area that have been recorded on the national data base and have discovered one which is not recorded. As part of assessing mounds for revegetation we have inspected 20 mounds in the Wedderburn and Skinners Flat block and have revegetated, direct seeding by hand, around 16 selected mounds. The team have also been involved in the identification of appropriate species for such revegetation and will complete their collection and treatment of seeds in the week leading up to Christmas. This training will involve techniques for collection of seed and the final cleaning and preparation of the seed which will then be used for further revegetation in 2017.



Apart from line searching, revegetation around malleefowl mounds and collection and treatment of seeds the team have also been involved in revegetation in the contour bands of the ***Restoration of a De-commissioned Eucalyptus Harvesting Site Project*** as well as a host of other activities including; stabbing wheel cactus, weeding of Paterson's curse, cactus biological-control by spreading Cochineal Scale beetle larvae at Mt Buckrabanyule, mapping nest box locations using GPS, erecting fences and laying reptile traps. The Green Army Project will officially finish on the 30th December this year.



The Wedderburn CMN will be hosting a public information session on Tuesday evening 6th December, 7.00 pm – 8.00 pm at the Wedderburn Community House to allow those interested to learn of the progress of the Green Army Team that we have had in our area of interest for the past 26 weeks. The hour will consist of short presentations given by the project managers, light refreshments and any questions / comments etc.

Article and photographs – Michael Moore

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**

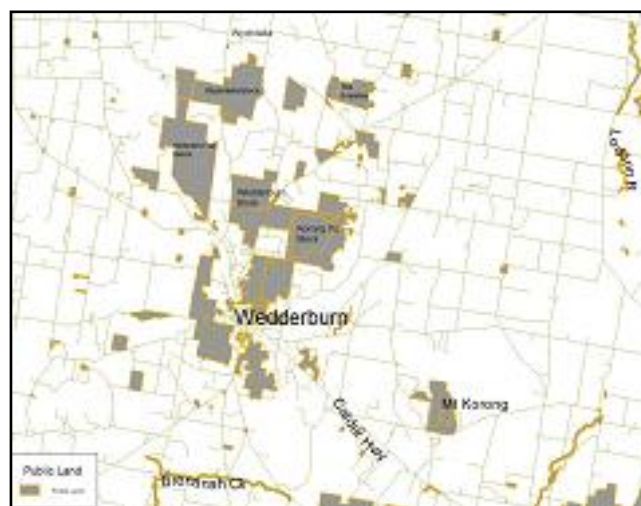
Website addresses

www.wedderburncmn.org

www.lpln.org.

LPLN- Loddon Plains Landcare Network

This newsletter is supported by the North Central CMA, through funding from the Australian Government's National Landcare Programme.



The WCMN Area of Interest

