



Catchment Landcare Network

Gecko CLaN

Newsletter

August – September 2013

Warrenbayne/Boho Land Protection Group
Molyullah/Tatong Tree and Land Protection Group
Goomalibee Landcare Group
Sheep Pen Creek Land Management Group
Swanpool and Districts Land Protection Group
South Yarrawonga Landcare Group
Yarrawonga Urban Landcare Group
Dookie Land Management Group
Burramine/Tungamah Land Management Group

Balmattum/Sheans Creek Landcare Group
Burnt Creek Landcare Group
Creightons Creek Landcare Group
Gooram Valley Landcare Group
Longwood East Landcare Group
Strathbogie Tablelands Landcare Group
Nagambie Landcare Group
Graytown/Costerfield Landcare Group

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Important Dates and Events:

21st August 2013

Benalla Indian Myna Action Group meeting, DEPI, 6pm

23rd August 2013

Invasive Animals Management Workshop, 10am – 1pm,
Glenrowan Memorial Hall, (03) 9207 5545

26th August 2013

Sheep Pen Creek AGM, Caniambo Hall, 6pm BBQ dinner
Direct seeding trials update and films, 5763 3301

28th August 2013

State Landcare Awards, Government House, Melbourne

11th September 2013

Gecko CLaN Executive Meeting

13th September 2013

Warrenbayne-Boho Landcare Group AGM

29th September 2013

Swanpool Farm Wetland Walk, 10am-1pm, 0400 370 009

From the Chair

We do indeed 'live in interesting times'.

We are celebrating a successful year and soon will be attending the State Landcare Awards at Government House. The Gecko CLaN also have three Community Landcare Grants which are now underway.

But the future holds a good deal of uncertainty. We have submitted three large grant applications, each worth six figures sums and spanning two or more years. We await the outcome of these applications, part of the 'Caring for our Country - Carbon Farming Initiative', at the same time as the Federal Government cuts spending and goes into caretaker mode.

For quite a few years now we have been able to continue our Landcare support activities with base funding coming from GBCMA. With GBCMA having itself undergone funding cuts, this source of funding is now insecure.

So what are our choices? There are options and we will need to debate these in coming months while we await the outcome of those grant applications.

It is not just our organisation that lives with uncertainty. My feeling is that the nation, and indeed the world as a whole, is at a crossroads. The challenges of peak oil, population and climate change must all be faced in the next few short years.

Come along to our next Network meeting to hear more and contribute your suggestions as to 'where we go from here'.

Ian Herbert

Communities for Nature Funding NOW OPEN

The Victorian Government has launched the 2013 Communities for Nature Small and Large Grants Funding Opportunity.

Small: Up to \$10,000
Large: \$10,000 - \$100,000

Priorities Include:

- * Biodiversity and habitat preservation
- * Threatened species recovery
- * Sustainable management of native wildlife
- * Revegetation
- * Cleaning up waterways
- * Improving water quality in the Yarra River and Port Phillip Bay and their tributaries
- * Control of weeds and pest animals

Projects that will be completed by 30 June 2016 are eligible for funding.

Applications close midnight 13th September 2013.

Further information:

1300 366 356

www.depi.vic.gov.au

Students get their Hands Dirty with Sustainable Ag

The Gecko CLaN's Sustainable Futures in Agriculture project is well underway with several excursions conducted. The project aims to expose students to the opportunities and possibilities within the agriculture industry whilst giving them a sustainability focus.

As part of the project Benalla P-12 year 9 students and FCJ College agriculture students visited the National Environment Centre in Thurgoona. The National Environment Centre is an organic farm which forms part of the Riverina Institute of TAFE. The farm utilises innovative techniques and ecological principles to produce food through working with nature, rather than against it.

The second visit was to Marriott family farm, Yarallah Lamb. Tom Marriott provided a talk about the business, the importance of maintaining a healthy environment, the agriculture industry and provided a demonstration of how to draft sheep using the automatic scales. A delicious BBQ lunch of Yarallah Lamb was enjoyed by all.

WARRENBAYNE BOHO LAND PROTECTION GROUP INC

Friday September 13th 2013

Warrenbayne Hall

6pm Casserole Dinner

7.30pm Annual General Meeting

Guest Speaker: **STEVE WILSON**
"Landcare in Inland Australia"

Steve has had a diverse and fascinating career, working as a jackaroo, on prawn trawlers, in zoos, and in Western Queensland developing the natural resource management plan for Lake Eyre Basin Catchment.

RSVP Dru Green 57981372,

Janet Pruden 57632296

Soil Microbiology with Euroa Ag students

A white frosty Strathbogie morning didn't deter Year 9 students from Euroa Secondary College's Agribusiness and Horticulture class. The students, led by teacher Matt Long, were at the Strathbogie Tableland Landcare group's alternative fertiliser trial site to learn how to take soil samples and pasture cuts as part of their agriculture studies. This day formed part of the Gecko CLaN's Soil Microbiology Project.

The alternative fertiliser trial was set up by the Strathbogie Tableland Landcare Group on David Hamilton's property. The group is testing the cost effectiveness of nine different fertilisers on grass production. In all, there are 10 treatments replicated four times.

Greg Bekker, DEPI, briefed students on what they would be doing for the day and why, explaining the importance of taking accurate samples. "We were all very impressed by the willingness of the students to learn and their ability to stick to the task," Greg said. Chocolate frogs were given out to students who knew the periodic table symbols for plant major nutrients such as phosphorus, sulphur and potassium. "It's about applying classroom theory in the paddock," according to Greg. "The day highlighted the complexities of farming and some of the tools farmers use to make decisions."

Landmark agronomist Sarah Hill assisted on the day and spent some time explaining her role to the students, illustrating how their studies might be used in future jobs. Students Grace Young and Kiona Smith, both from Nagambie, said their love of being outside and animals were their main reasons for choosing to study agriculture. "I love animals and farming and that side of things," said Kiona.



Kiona Smith and Grace Young of Nagambie mix a soil sample for biological testing.



Maddie Weston, Jade McNamara and Georgina Ulrich taking pasture cuts.



The group at the Strathbogie Alternative Fertiliser site on David Hamilton's property.

Farm Wetland for Woodlands Project Update

Strathbogie Ranges CMN and Gecko CLaN

There's a busy time ahead! The project is now into its second and final year and although we've already achieved a lot, there's plenty more to do. This is particularly so as more people and landholders learn about the project and get involved.

Wetland rehabilitation at most of the current project sites is well-underway. This includes:

- fencing to exclude stock,
- earthworks to increase shallow-water areas,
- planting shrubs, water plants and trees to improve aquatic habitats as well as the surrounding woodlands,
- installing nest-boxes for Squirrel Gliders and Brush-tailed Phascogales,
- controlling environmental weeds that degrade wetland areas,
- re-introducing fallen timber and logs for aquatic and semi-aquatic habitat.

We now have 12 project sites, but will be looking for several more in the coming months, so if you know of someone that's interested, let us know. One of the best outcomes of the project so far is the enthusiasm with which some of the landholders have taken up the challenge of improving their wetlands. It's also great to see a variety of wetlands in the project, not just farm dams. Natural wetlands in this landscape actually dry up seasonally in most years and the regular wetting and drying pattern is important in keeping them healthy. Too much, or permanent, water can degrade natural wetlands. Of course it's a bit different for farm dams, but at least the message is getting out there, that a wetland doesn't have to have water in it all the time.

For more information about this project contact Bertram Lobert on 03 5790 8606 or go to <http://www.strathbogie.ranges.cm.nsw.gov.au/>



Setting up remote cameras at Alan Neander's wetland site.



Alan Neander and his son Andrew in front of the planted wetland site.

Indian Myna Project Update

Nearly all Landcare groups in the Gecko CLaN are now actively trapping having received a free Indian Myna trap thanks to a grant from the GBCMA. Get in touch with your local group if you would like to borrow a trap.

The Benalla Indian Myna Action Group is alive and well, with committee members including a trapping coordinator, data coordinator, trap building coordinator and treasurer.

To date approximately 200 Indian Myna's have been destroyed and reported to the group, and 59 traps have been sold through the group. Regular articles are being sent to the Benalla Ensign which continue to raise awareness about Indian Myna's, and to encourage people to get involved and to report trapping data. Media coverage has also generated interest from Glenrowan and Wangaratta.

Additionally, Action Group members have been presenting to other community groups including the Benalla Gardening and Probus clubs.

Trap building sessions are being held every Wednesday at the old Men's Shed at CAL Industries Farm, at 1pm. Those who come and help out with trap building for the afternoon have the opportunity to purchase a trap at a cheaper rate. All are welcome to participate. For more information on trap building contact Gary on 57624564. Traps are also available for purchase from Landmark at a cost of \$50.

For further information on the Benalla Indian Myna Action Group please contact either Samantha Hood or Ian Jordan. The next meeting will be Wednesday the 21st of August, 6pm at DEPI Offices on Sydney Rd. Happy trapping!

Contact Details

Trapping Coordinator:
Ian Jordan 0407 807 302 or 5762 7795

Data Collector:
Samantha Hood 0488 471 053 or 5762 7795
benallamynagroup@yahoo.com
Please send trapping data to Samantha at the end of each month.

'Growing Your Potential' at Dookie Forum

Audiences were inspired to grow their business potential at the Annual Farm Forum at Dookie on the 31st July. The event was presented by Goulburn Murray Landcare Network and supported by the Gecko CLaN. The forum was jam-packed with inspirational speakers around the themes of marketing, soil health and biodiversity.

The forum featured speakers from industry, government, farmers and not for profits organisations including Lynne Wilkinson, CEO of Ausbuy. Ausbuy is a not for profit organisation that works to ensure that Australian manufacturing and agricultural companies remain Australian owned to ensure that all jobs, profits and benefits remain here. Many iconic Australian companies are now owned by foreign companies, meaning that important decisions are made off shore to benefit foreign interests, and often to the detriment of Australian manufacturers and primary producers. We need to protect our own people and industries to ensure that we have Australian farmers growing our food and Australian manufacturing in the future. Lynne encouraged the audience to lobby their local member and to use buying power to make choices that protect Australia.

Gemma Gadd of Currie communications presented at the conclusion of the day on 'Agricultural news, media and marketing: Telling your story'. She spoke about why agriculture needs to be heard, who are you talking to, and how to tell your story. Gemma provided the audience with some practical tools of how to achieve these goals using key communication strategies. Her key messages were keep your message short and sharp and use the correct media to communicate to your target audience. Getting your message out there may include using traditional or social media, or as simple as finding conversations to contribute to.

The following speakers also presented;

- Mark McKenzie, *Rivalea*, marketing strategies.
- Declan McDonald, *DEPI*, Soil Biology.
- Nick Nagle, *Resource GV*, Farm Waste Management Issues
- Kirsten Larsen, *Eaterprises*, Online Marketing.
- Cath and Tom Marriott, *Yarallah Lamb*
- Karen Brisbane, *GBCMA*, Nest Boxes
- Greta Morgan and Hilda Stewart, *Parks Vic*, A little bit of Culture
- Liz Evans, *Dookie Indigenous Seed Bank*, Seeds for the Future
- Kevin Wilkinson, *DEPI*, Compost Trials
- Rob Fenton, *National Environment Centre*, Organic Farming
- Steve Hamilton, Roadside Weed Management
- Charlie Sexton, *GBCMA*, Carbon Farming Initiative
- Geoff Lodge, *GV Community Energy*, Farm Energy Efficiency

From the Project Officer's

Melanie & Kerri

The Gecko CLaN continues to increase its involvement with local organisations, schools and community groups. Recently Kerri took part in the Euroa Secondary College's careers fair, which consisted of one on one, 'speed date' sessions with students discussing careers in agriculture. Kerri noted that we need to overcome the idea that to work in agriculture you have to be a farmer and that there are so many different types of jobs and opportunities available within the agriculture industry.

The Gecko CLaN was invited to take part in Benalla Rural City Councils 'Climate Change Adaptation Action Plan' launch. Chairman Ian Herbert represented the Gecko CLaN at the launch which took place on the 26th July, to coincide with National Tree Day. The Gecko CLaN also delivered a children's Landcare education session at the Benalla Library to celebrate National Tree Day.

July has been a busy time, developing our new projects, completing final reporting for old projects and submitting some large grant applications for the recent federal government funding rounds.

We are excited that Kerri has been nominated for the State Landcare Facilitator Award and has been invited to attend the awards ceremony at Government House in Melbourne. Since beginning with the Gecko CLaN Kerri has been a dynamo for the network, and it is great to see her energy, dedication and long hours being recognised in this way. Congratulations Kerri!

After winning the Regional Landcare Award, the Gecko CLaN is also nominated for the State Landcare Network Award, and Gecko CLaN representatives will be joining Kerri at the awards ceremony at government house.

As always if you need any assistance with projects, funding or Landcare related matters please don't hesitate to give Kerri or myself a call.

Melanie



Please submit newsletter items to:
PO BOX 124, Benalla,
VICTORIA, 3672
Email:
landcare1@inet.net.au

For all Gecko CLaN & Pasture Cropping information:
<http://goulburnbroken.landcarevic.net.au/mgbclan>