



Catchment Landcare Network

Broken Catchment Landcare Network

Newsletter

June – July 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 Yarrowonga Landcare Group
Yarrowonga 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:

- 20th June** The Benefits of Revegetating our Local Creeks and Wetlands – Warrenbayne Hall, 7-9pm
- 26th June** Native Grasses for a Pasture Grazing System
- 31st July** 'Growing Your Potential' Farm Forum – Dookie College
- 7th August** Gecko CLaN Network meeting

For latest updates on Gecko CLaN activities and events go to:

<http://goulburnbroken.landcarevic.net.au/mgbclan>

From the Chair

Some weeks are better than others; the last two have been brilliant!

First off the Community Landcare Grants were announced and the Gecko CLaN region did very well, pulling in 14% of the State total. The projects cover all aspects of Landcare as you can read in the descriptions.

Then we held the inaugural Swanpool Environmental Film Festival and it went off smoothly with high quality speakers, films and food.

The following Tuesday the Deputy Premier Peter Ryan came to Swanpool with local MP Bill Sykes to announce that Swanpool had been granted \$270,000 to upgrade the hall and surrounds. Included in this figure are funds to ensure the cinema can continue to run.

Finally, to cap it off, at the Regional NRM Awards at Murchison we were awarded a very nice trophy for best Network over the past year. I hadn't even thought about it so was a bit lost for words – but very gratefully received. Thanks to everybody, especially our hard-working facilitators.

Not a bad couple of weeks? Now the celebrations are over and the hard work begins ...

Ian Herbert

NATIVE GRASSES FOR A PASTURE GRAZING SYSTEM - COLLECTION, ESTABLISHMENT AND MANAGEMENT OF NATIVE GRASSES.

Presented by Dr. Ian Chivers who founded the Native Seeds Company in 1988. Ian collaborates in research with many government organizations such as the RIRDC and the Australian Research Council, as well as the University of Melbourne, Southern Cross University, Royal Botanic Gardens Cranbourne, Kings Park Botanic Gardens W.A and Queensland Alliance for Agriculture and Food Innovation. It is Ian's love for native Australian grasses, and passion for the environment, that inspires him to selectively breed the best quality native Australian grass seeds.

He will explain how to collect native grass seed, how to store it, how to sow it.

WHEN: Wednesday 26th June

WHERE: Benalla Lakeside Community Centre, enter via Arundel Street.

(Vic Rds. ref: map 309 p9)

TIME: 10 am – 3.00pm (lunch & morning tea provided)

COST: No Charge

RSVP BY: 21st June 2013

**FOR BOOKINGS: Kerri Robson
0418 140 710**

Environmental Film Festival a Big Success

The first Swanpool Environmental Film Festival was a huge success last weekend, attracting over 200 people, with many travelling long distances to see 3 films and hear 3 fascinating speakers. The event was our community's way of marking World Environment Day, which occurred on 5th June.

This inspiring festival came about through growing concern within the community about major environmental issues, and the need for greater local awareness and action. The festival provided an opportunity for concerned locals to come together, and exchange and develop ideas about how to make positive change.

The last film was "Chasing Ice", a documentary by James Balog with compelling time-lapse photos of the rapid retreat and break-up of glaciers in Greenland, Iceland and Alaska. This film told the story of climate change from the point of view of Balog's aesthetic interest in photographing ice formations, and his decision to set up fixed cameras in the harshest of conditions to capture the changes to the glaciers, 'the canaries in the coal mine' of climate change.

"Surviving Progress" by Mathieu Roy & Harold Crooks, based on a book by Ronald Wright had some wonderful interviews with thinkers from around the globe, exploring the idea that sometimes humans have historically been caught in 'progress traps', and looking at civilizations, the history of debt, the reasons for deforestation and the case for why we must learn to use less if we are to survive our current civilization's progress trap. One particularly welcome interview was with Vaclav Smil, who with a rare dose of humour, managed to suggest that we're all addicted to material goods that are far more extravagant than necessary 'and he should know because they've just been renovating their bathroom.'

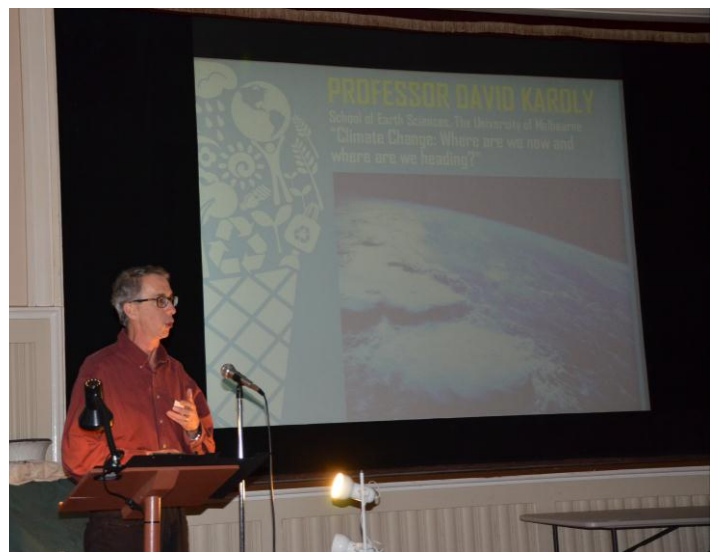
The first film of the day was an Australian film called "A Smarter Country" where director Margaret Anne Smith had travelled around and interviewed some of the most progressive designers, engineers, public officials and entrepreneurs in Australia. Of particular interest was the work by Beyond Zero Emissions in developing its plan to meet Australia's stationary energy needs with renewable energy sourced from wind turbines, concentrating solar thermal plants (mirrors heating up a salt solution) and biofuels. There were also very interesting conversations with architects Richard Francis Jones and Martin Urugawa, and the CEO of a company called Dyesol, that is manufacturing paints that can generate energy.

Interspersed between the films were some thoughtful and wide-ranging speakers. The first speaker for the day was Ray Thomas, founder and driver of the Regent Honeyeater project, which has been revegetating the Lurg hills for 18 years. Ray was very keen to remind us that the 'big picture' is made up of lots of little pictures, and that the commitment of thousands of people has wrought some great restoration on one part of our district.

Barney Foran spoke about the links between what we buy in supermarkets and its effects on some of our planetary problems, notably loss of habitat and loss of species. As usual, he gave practical advice about some things to do: buy the local stuff, look for the 'certification' logos that show that companies are committed to sustainability, recognise 'greenwash' that companies will use to pass themselves off as doing things better than they are really, and continue to lobby companies to improve their practices (and payments) back to suppliers in tropical countries.

The third speaker was Professor David Karoly from Melbourne University, who like many academics, started off as a climate change 'skeptic' 25 years ago, but then realised the significance of the trends in the data he was looking at. He emphasised the point that what we do in the next decade will dictate whether our grandchildren are living in a world that is hot, hotter or boiling. Our governments' targets for percentage reduction in greenhouse gas emissions are hopelessly unambitious – we need to reduce 25-50% by 2020, and this is achievable, if there is a consistent regulatory framework for business to operate within.

Barney Foran commented after the event, that it was very heartening to see a community getting its act together to focus on this crucial, crucial issue. The day was a partnership between the Swanpool Landcare and Cinema, Gecko CLaN Landcare Network and Benalla Sustainable Future Group, with support from 8 sponsoring organisations. The superb catering by the Swanpool & District Community Development Association enabled everyone to stay the distance and share their experiences and understanding over the course of the day.



Professor David Karoly presenting at the festival on 'Climate Change: Where are we now and where are we headed?'

Indian Myna Project Update

After receiving overwhelming interest at the Indian Myna information session in April hosted by Gecko CLaN and Benalla Rural City Council, a Benalla Indian Myna Action Group has been formed. The group now consists of a trapping coordinator, a data collector, a trap building coordinator, media person and several concerned community members.

Although bird numbers are reducing, interest in them is increasing and the group aims to ensure that the area is ready for the influx of Indian Myna's when the weather warms up again.

A trap building day was held at the end of May with Lindsay Mustan, who has been working to eradicate Indian Myna's around Tullygaroopna for several years. 12 people attended the workshop and this has sparked continuing from attendees, some of whom are meeting every Wednesday afternoon at the CAL Community Farm to construct traps, which will be sold through the group. All are welcome to come and help out or just to come and have a look at how to build traps. For more information on trap building contact Gary Versteegen on 5762 4564.

An Indian Myna information session has also been held in Yarrawonga in addition to an evening hosted by Swanpool Landcare.

Nearly all Landcare groups in the Gecko CLaN now have a trap to share amongst their group. If your group has not received a trap yet but would like one please contact us.

Further information:

Benalla Indian Myna Action Group & trap sales

benallamynagroup@yahoo.com

Ian Jordan

Trapping coordinator

(03) 5762 7795 or 0407 807 302

Samantha Hood

Data Coordinator

(03) 5762 7795 or 0488 471 053

Other contacts

Larissa Montgomery

Environmental Sustainability Coordinator

Benalla Rural City Council

larissa.montgomery@benalla.vic.gov.au

(03) 5760 2600

Useful websites

www.feralscan.org.au/mynascan/

www.indianmynaaction.org.au/

www.indianmynaeradication.com/

www.dpi.vic.gov.au/agriculture/pests-diseases-and-weeds/pest-animals

In the Media: Benalla Threatened by Indian Mynas

Indian Myna birds have been identified as one of the World's Worst 100 Invasive Species by the World Conservation Union. They were introduced to Australia in the 1860's to control locust and pests in market gardens. However like the introduction of the cane toad and the rabbit the consequences of introducing Indian Mynas were not understood and now we are left with a significant environmental problem. The threat isn't restricted to Australia, places like Singapore, New Zealand and Hawaii have witnessed many native birds being pushed to extinction as a result of the introduction of Myna birds.

It's not just native birds that are threatened; Indian Mynas compete with and remove small mammals including possums and sugar gliders from tree hollows, spread noxious weeds and also spread disease. The Rural City of Benalla including its outer lying areas are no exceptions with large flocks being sighted not only in the city centre but also out of town in places including Lurg, Tatong and Baddaginnie. The threat presented to Benalla by Indian Myna's is real, they are prolific breeders and will only be stopped by concerted community effort.

A number of community action groups have been established in Australia to combat the threat presented by the Indian Myna. As a result of the leadership of the Benalla Rural City Council and the Gecko Clan Landcare Project a Benalla Indian Myna Action Group has been established. The aim of the group is to eradicate Indian Mynas from our local environment.

The most efficient means of eradication is by trapping but everyone can help by not leaving food scraps and dog food out for them to eat and by blocking access to roof cavities and garbage bins. So far more than one hundred local residents are involved with the Benalla Indian Myna Action Group many have achieved great results from trapping however given the prolific breeding habits of Indian Mynas it will take a whole of community approach to be really effective.



Trap building workshop with Benalla Indian Myna Action Group

Rabbit Control at Boho

'I want one' were the words on everyone's lips after seeing the excavator ripping up rabbit warrens, under the expert hand of Colin Tingay at the Warrenbayne Boho Rabbit Control Field Day on Saturday the 18th May. 26 attendees watched the smooth and controlled motion of the excavator, as it ripped up the warrens with a few escapees and fluffy casualties along the way.

Colin and Heather Tingay of 'Tingay's Landcare Service' presented the day which also included a baiting demonstration and discussion on different methods of rabbit control. The field day was held at Jim Dalton's property at Warrenbayne and was followed by a delicious BBQ lunch, special thanks go to Jim.

The day forms part of a project on blackberry and rabbit control that is being undertaken by the Warrenbayne Boho Land Protection Group. For more information on how to become involved in the project please contact Ken Heywood on 0427 632 380.



Granite Creeks Projects



Rabbit Control Program – Baiting, Ripping and Harbour Control program 2013-14

Open to all Landholders of the Landcare groups within the Granite Creeks Project Area:

Burnt Creek – Sandy Mackenzie ph: 5796 2088
Balmattum/Sheans Creek –John Gall ph: 5795 3138
Creighton's Creek –Barry Noye ph: 5790 3223
Gooram Valley – Bethany Devanny ph: 5795 2849
Longwood East – Jenny Wilson ph: 0459 023 690
Strathbogie Tablelands – David Jamieson
ph: 5790 5236

Gecko CLaN Funding Success

Recently the Gecko CLaN was informed that it was successful in receiving all three grants applied in the recent CFOC Community Landcare Grants.

Resilient Sustainable Agriculture: enhancing farmers skills and knowledge

This project will provide training for farmers in the latest practices for agriculture and improve their knowledge of sustainable agricultural techniques. The importance of biodiversity and vegetation/ground cover management in sustainable farming will be the key issue addressed; focusing on topics such as planning for rotational grazing, pasture management, land use capability mapping, landscape water-use efficiency, animal requirements, plant identification, soil structure and the importance of soil carbon and health.

Reverse the Dirt - New innovations in Erosion Control

This project will demonstrate and encourage the adoption of practices to mitigate soil erosion, especially in areas affected by recent fires in the Violet Town area. The steep hill slopes of the area are prone to water erosion which impact upon the ability of farmers to sustainably manage the soil resource base and ultimately provide food and fibre. The project will assist farmers affected by soil degradation via activities such as on ground works, demonstrations and publicity. The project will also look at the concerns of containment line that a placed in fires areas and how best to restore to limited erosion.

Turning up the Heat on Chilean Needle Grass

Chilean needle grass is a major threat to biodiversity and agriculture in the Broken Catchment. This 'Weed of National Significance' is an aggressive competitor in natural grasslands and pastures, that spreads easily and is very difficult to eradicate once established. This grant will form the third phase of the Gecko CLaN's highly successful Chilean needle grass campaign. This project will consist of two parts; community education activities and provision of a spraying subsidy to encourage landholders to take action on private land. The Gecko CLaN will continue to work closely with local shire councils, Vicroads and government agencies to ensure coordinated action to reduce the spread of Chilean needle grass.

Another three Landcare groups within the Gecko CLaN were successful in receiving funding. Congratulations to the Sheep Pen Creek Group for their project 'Targeting infestations of Chilean Needle Grass and Bridal Creeper', to the Dookie Land Management Group for their project 'Optimising inputs through innovation in soil moisture monitoring' and to the Warby Range Landcare Group for their project, 'Saving and Sustaining Sound Soils'.

Gecko CLaN Wins Regional Landcare Awards

Congratulations to all members and groups in the Gecko CLaN for winning the network award at the Landcare awards on Friday 14th June in Murchison.

The winners included:

Avenel Primary School – Community Education Award
Merton Landcare Group – Community NRM Group Award
The Gecko CLaN – Community NRM Network Award
Paringa Livestock, Tom and Olivia Lawson – GBCMA Sustainable Farming Award
Craig Tuhan – Hubert Miller Perpetual Award

Congratulations also go to:

Jacci Campbell
Highly Commended – Hubert Millar Award
Strathbogie Alternative Fertilisers Project
Highly Commended – GBCMA Sustainable Agriculture Award
Chilean Needle Grass Project
Highly Commended – Community Education Award



Winners of the Regional Landcare Awards.

From the Project Officer's

Melanie & Kerri

The Strathbogie Council Roadside Weed program is going well with the first stage now completed and the second round of funding to be available in July. Through the program, the shire has utilised Landcare groups to help deliver its on ground works.

The Gecko CLaN is continuing its work with local secondary schools with the 'Sustainable Futures in Agriculture' project. Last week Rob Fenton from the National Environment Centre introduced year 9 students at Benalla P-12 College to sustainable agriculture principles and this week students will be travelling up to the centre at Thurgoona for a farm visit. The project aims to educate and inspire students about the possibilities and opportunities in the agriculture industry while increasing their awareness around sustainability issues.

This week students at Euroa Secondary College will be assisting in taking soil microbiology tests, plant tissue testing and dry feed calculation at the Strathbogie Alternative Fertiliser Trial site as part of the Gecko CLaN's Soil Microbiology project.

As always, if you need any assistance with projects, funding or any Landcare matters please don't hesitate to contact us as we are happy to help.

Pasture Cropping Update

We are nearing the completion of our Caring for our Country grant with only some plant tissue, soil carbon and microbiology tests to be carried out and then the final reporting.

We held a successful day in Benalla last week where the farmers had their say on their Pasture Cropping journey. A book of interviews conducted by Kim Woods [ex Weekly Times journalist] was available. David Marsh, a board member of Soils for Life spoke of his holistic approach to farm management.



We have been successful in receiving a Community Landcare grant for \$50,000 which will enable us to run a series of events until the end of next year. We have also submitted applications for other related grants which we should hear if we have been successful in the near future.

If anyone wishes to receive copies of our books contact Melanie or Jacci Campbell. If you wish to receive the Pasture Cropping newsletter email Jacci at office@campbellfarms.com.au

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



For all Gecko CLaN & Pasture Cropping
information:

<http://goulburnbroken.landcarevic.net.au/>

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