

Over The Hills & Plains

A newsletter of the Eastern Hills & Murray Plains Catchment Group Inc

Volume 10 Issue 3

March 2009

Have your say on water management in the Marne Saunders

Inside this issue:

[click on titles to view articles](#)

[Editorial](#)

[Harry's Corner](#)

[The Road to No-Where](#)

[A free one on one whole of property review](#)

[Monarto Zoo's New Chimpanzee Habitat](#)

[Ferries MacDonald Road Freight Route](#)

[Carbon Accounting - Old Revegetation and Woodlots](#)

[New directions for Mt Pleasant Natural Resource Centre](#)

[Times change - lets move on](#)

[Contacts](#)

The draft Water Allocation Plan for the Marne Saunders Prescribed Water Resources Area has been released for comment by the South Australian Murray-Darling Basin Natural Resources Management Board (SA MDB NRM Board). The Plan is a key part of the water prescription process that provides for long-term, sustainable water resource management for the benefit of all users, including the environment.



Marne River near the confluence with the North Rhine

Concern about the impact of water resource development on water sharing and the environment prompted the prescription of the Marne Saunders region in 2003. Under prescription, water use is regulated using a system of allocation and licensing, excluding non-licensed purposes such as stock and domestic use. This protects the resources from over-use, minimises adverse effects from new water resource development on water users, and ensures water is available to sustain the environment. A water allocation plan guides this process by setting policies for taking, using and transferring water.

The SAMDB NRM Board has produced the draft Plan following extensive deliberations by the community-based Marne Saunders Water Resources Planning Committee, collaborative work with organisations such as the Department for Water, Land and Biodiversity Conservation (DWLBC) and Rural Solutions SA, and with significant input from the community and other stakeholders in previous consultation stages.

The draft Plan includes policies on:

- sustainable allocation limits
- transfer of allocations between users
- provision of water for the environment
- rollover of unused allocations to later years
- water use efficiency
- minimising impacts from new water resource development
- monitoring and reporting and
- water affecting activities such as construction of wells and dams for any purpose, works in watercourses and use of effluent and imported water.

Two well attended public meetings have been held to provide information on the draft Plan and to seek comments. Written submissions can also be made on the draft Plan to the SAMDB NRM Board.

Editorial

Welcome to the March 2009 edition of Over the Hills & Plains.

2009 has moved off to an uncertain start. We have been able to fund around 20 projects for the first half of the year from money provided by the NRM Levy and from money held over from 2008 funding. This is most welcome as we move into the new arrangements of Caring for Our Country and we thank the SAMDB NRM Board for their efforts in assisting us.



In the second half of the year we should be able to fund our regular round of landholder projects with funding sourced from the Federal Government initiative and hopefully with some much needed improvements to incentive rates. The constant delays in the organizational process however, are frustrating and disconcerting. The general belief among LAP groups is that money will not be ready to flow by July, leaving considerable uncertainty in the minds of project officers as to the security of their positions. Already some have voted with their feet or are openly pursuing alternative employment. This is understandable as they have families to support and other financial commitments, but it represents an unfortunate loss of local knowledge to our programs.

We are also in the midst of a number of environmental issues. The fight for Dorset Reserve continues with the case still pending before the Environment Resources and Development Court.

The community of residents at Monarto South are similarly divided over the proposed freight route along Ferries MacDonalld Road. This edition of OH&P examines the issue from two different perspectives.

In this edition we also examine developments at the Monarto Zoo, now the biggest open range zoo in the southern hemisphere with around 1500 ha. Libby Lawson, well known to landholders at Mt Pleasant lets us know what she is up to this year. We also hear from Faye McGoldrick about programs at the Mt Pleasant NRC and from further north again we hear on the progress of the Marne Water Allocation Plan. Of course Harry is up to his old tricks and has provided something to chew on in Harry's Corner.

I hope you enjoy this edition of Over the Hills & Plains. Happy reading.

continued from front page

All comments submitted through the consultation process will be considered when finalising the Plan. The consultation period ends on Monday 6 April 2009.

The SA MDB NRM Board's Water Allocation Planning Manager, Mr Cameron Welsh, urges the community to continue to be involved in the consultation process. "We have had a great range of suggestions and responses in previous consultation rounds to help us develop this draft Plan. The current call for comments is the final phase of consultation for the development of the Water Allocation Plan. We encourage anyone to write in and have their say," said Mr Welsh.

Further information on the consultation process, including copies of the draft Plan, a guide to the draft Plan, contact details for making written submissions, and opportunities to make an appointment to discuss the draft Plan are available by calling the SAMDB NRM Board on (08) 8532 1432 or visiting the website at www.samdbnrm.sa.gov.au



Stock exclusion from watercourses improves water quality for stock, drinking water

Eastern Hills & Murray Plains Catchment Group
Murray Bridge Natural Resources Centre, Mannum Road
PO Box 2056, Murray Bridge SA 5253
ph: 08 8531 2077
fax: 08 8532 5300
email: ehmp@internode.on.net

Harry's Corner



With friends like this.....

In 2008 the new Labor government announced that the Business Plan for the Caring for our Country Program would be released in early September 2008.

Intending to avoid the transitional problems that plagued the changeover from the previous Labor scheme to that favoured by the Liberals when they assumed power ten years earlier, early notification and implementation were to be the hallmark of this process. Unavoidably delayed, the Business Plan finally emerged into the public gaze very late in November 2008.

The Grand Tour to explain The Plan to the world of Natural Resource Management arrived in Murray Bridge on the 9th of December. NRM across the country was to be blessed with an allocation of \$2.25 billion to be spread Australia-wide and it was for a five year program. We in the southern states might have a little difficulty applying credibly for the areas earmarked for The Great Barrier Reef, Cane Toads, Northern Indigenous Communities or even Tasmanian Devils. In fact we really only had ready access to around 14% of the funds available, but wasn't it good, such a big number up front? The presenter seemed a trifle miffed that few questions were asked and there seemed to be general lack of enthusiasm. In the absence of detail we were to refer to The Web Site. Of course the difficult thing on the day was that The Web Site did not actually have the details, but they would be appearing there, soon, we were assured. The other unfortunate coincidence was the release in the same week of the first 'stimulus package', whereby large sums were handed out

with no application necessary, no targets needing to be achieved, and definitely no quarterly reporting. Best of all the money was to be spent on absolutely anything; debt reduction, vices, necessities or indulgences. Best of all was the size, the bit that really counts; the \$10.5 billion sweetener. There was some suggestion at the time that this apparent inequity could be seen as an insult to the thousands of people who volunteer their time to undertake NRM activity, but this was discounted as possible sour grapes. After all, these people actually cared about the future of their country; they weren't in it for the money. Fortunately Christmas was around the corner and so any frisson of resentment quickly washed away in the tide of Chrissie drinks.

To ensure the Caring for our Country message was getting through, and to ease the burden of applications, the collected LAP organizations were treated to another round of explanation of Caring for our Country on the 16th of January. This definitely helped, though not entirely in the way that was intended. When the Chief Communicator had to contact Canberra to resolve an inconsistency in the scheme, the robustness of the new system was thrown into question. The good news that the answer was forthcoming within an hour, but this is not an option available to most applicants. The general opinion seemed to be that, given the process so far, there was very little chance that the intended July roll-out would occur. This would leave the funding of activities and staff as a looming issue for the LAPs whose reserves do not stretch to cover any extended period of unfunded operation. Needless to say this uncertainty has resulted in significant decline in morale amongst staff, whose financial security is dependent on the process being delivered as proposed and on time. Following the devastating bushfires in Victoria over the weekend of the 7th February the deadline for Caring for our Country applications was extended by a month.

While on the surface this was to provide \$5 million for Bushfire Recovery Projects, the money will be drawn from the existing Caring for our Country funds, and is not 'new' money.

Announced by Minister for Environment,

Heritage and the Arts, Peter Garrett, and The Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forests, Tony Bourke, on the 12th of February this promised to further delay the delivery of this program. Effectively the delivery of \$5 million into Victoria has delayed the delivery of an unrelated program delivering \$2.5 Billion. In fact I believe it was an extremely cynical political act, of little real benefit considering the scale of the disaster, which fortuitously provided a convenient excuse for the extension the program needed because of the incompetence of its delivery.

Hot on the heels of this has come the news that we can look forward to another stimulus package. The scale of this package puts the real value placed on NRM activity into perspective. \$42 billion, delivered through a variety of mechanisms but generally not directed and with few prerequisites. However the magnitude of the lost opportunity is staggering. Why are jobs delivering some (any) of the desperately needed activities to maintain the very basis of our biological infrastructure be considered too insignificant to be funded from this pool? Since when does pest animal and plant control not count as work? Is revegetation activity cost-free now, fencing for free? Each of these and the many other similar activities generate economic activity, use materials that have to be purchased, give people real jobs. They are also activities that occur in the main in non urban areas. These are the very areas severely hit by the economic decline, with the agricultural sector already under massive pressures from the ongoing climatic crisis, compounded by the rapid contraction of mining and associated activity.

While the NRM sector waits with growing cynicism and declining morale the Government demonstrates its capacity to roll out billions of dollars within a few months. All of which confirms the narrow minded, short sighted perspective of the political process. The tragedy is that the pool of good will is being drained by cynical politics and inefficient bureaucracies with the community the loser as long term opportunities are traded for short term fixes.

Harry Seager is EHMPCCG Implementation Officer and Chair of the Goolwa to Wellington LAP Board.

The Road to No-Where

A quarter century ago I was one of several hundred immigrants to the Monarto area, drawn there by the acreage allotments created by the end of the Monarto Development Commission new town activities. The opportunity was thereby offered to become custodian of some land in need of some care, a feeling shared amongst most of the people moving in to their own allotments, often 40ha in size. My working life is in environmental building, and in my case therefore a happy mix of personal and professional interest.

The state of private lands in the Monarto area today is a tribute to the efforts of these landowners in revegetation, weed and feral animal control and bushfire fuel load control. The results are the improved land stability, flora diversity and wildlife corridors achieved. These are particularly relevant characteristics along Ferries McDonald Road in Monarto South. The road abuts the Monarto Conservation Park, arrows through the Ferries McDonald Conservation Park, and at its northern end faces the Monarto Zoological Park. The private lands thus form a logical continuity between all these; in line with the state government Department of Environment & Heritage 'Naturelinks' corridor declared in November 2008 for Murray - Coorong.

Thus, when locals ask questions about the future of their locality, this is well beyond NIMBY behaviour, this is about consistency in strategic planning. The proposal therefore to develop a transport route on the Ferries McDonald Road alignment is incongruous in this wider consistent context. When asked about the rationale for such a thing, the promoters point to the declaration of a north-south road corridor on the eastern side of the Mount Lofty Ranges as stated in some consultant reports.

That claim however, has inconsistencies which haven't ever been satisfactorily answered. Including, while a transport corridor linking Burra to Sturt Highway to SE Freeway creates a link; what precisely does the southern end of Ferries McDonald Road link to? South Coast or Kangaroo Island traffic?

Aerial view over Monarto Conservation Park viewed south-east toward Ferries-McDonald Conservation Park zig-zag in the background. Photograph by Dr. Rachel Westcott from the rear seat in Emilis' sailplane VH-HND.



The Strathalbyn - Callington connector already exists and is more direct. Ferries McDonald contributes nothing. Langhorne Creek northward or eastward? Existing routes to Woodchester connecting to the above already serves green waste transport; and Brinkley Road toward Murray Bridge, both existing sealed routes. Ferries McDonald contributes nothing. What Ferries McDonald Road does link to is the dried out shore of Lake Alexandrina. That is a powerful symbol about what happens when humans take more from the environment than what it holds.

As a result the federal government asked these questions in June 2008, having placed an EPBC 'controlled action' on the road. The questions they (EPBC) raise also canvas the impact on the area's flora and fauna. Consultants' reports suggest there will be some impact that can't be helped, so some road signs can be put up, but (metaphorically) what can you do?

As locals, we know that while we travel at modest speeds on Ferries McDonald Road, the roadkill numbers are very low. And that when visitors use open road speeds here, road kill impacts rise. Obviously, a sealed road enables the latter, a transport route mandates the higher speeds. Roadkill numbers are predicted to skyrocket.

The EPBC in particular is concerned with impact on the last local malleefowl population here (the last west of the river),

a distinct sub-species of other populations east of the River Murray. We locals are more widely interested. Consultants assure us Red Lored Whistler haven't been seen here for 70 years; yet we hear and very occasionally see this timid mallee ground feeder on private property. We similarly value the reptiles, mallee birds, echidna, and in size upward to the kangaroo. All at risk from traffic impacts. The mallee birds mostly inhabit an aviasphere close to ground level, about the same height as a truck bullbar. The road promoters suggest diverting the road around Ferries McDonald Conservation Park, without understanding that animals don't forage and travel to human drawn boundary lines. Road kill removes from the planet resources whose value we can't yet know.

Build a transport route, and with peak oil and climate change, decline in use as transport methods change, is just an opportunity cost. Build a transport route and remove bio-diversity, and we may well find that the medical discovery your kids need to live may no longer be available to us. Destroying bio-diversity is forever, an irretrievable cost; the road is just this financial year's profit centre. Emilis Pregauskas

A free one on one whole of property review

Here is a chance for landholders affected by salinity and recharge within the South Australian Murray Darling Basin region, to attend a FREE Whole Property Planning Program. The program will be run by Ellis Farm Consultancy, in conjunction with the South Australian Murray Darling Basin Natural Resources Management Board (SA Murray Darling Basin NRM Board).

The program will include a series of workshops in March with information on a variety of topics, including managing salinity and recharge to achieve environmental and productive benefits, calculating farm water requirements and availability, grazing management, drought confinement feeding and property planning.

As well as the workshops there will also be the opportunity for an Ellis Farm Consultant to visit each participating property for one-on-one advice. The consultants will help with stocking rates, recharge and salinity identification, pasture management, grazing management, environmental and pasture weeds, water resources and any other questions and concerns landholders may have.

Land affected by salinity has always been seen as an unusable resource to landholders. The program will consider the management options for these areas, and how to make sound, productive and environmental decisions on looking after them.

The workshops will discuss information on subjects such as revegetating with both non-grazing species and edible species. Confinement feeding and the maintenance of groundcover and perennial plant health will also be addressed. Sustainable grazing over autumn and into the break of season is the most critical time for pastures - overgrazing can lead to soil erosion and delay the feed available after the opening rains.

The program will also offer landholders the opportunity to prepare a property management plan. To develop the 'best practice' property plans a free high resolution aerial photo of the individual properties will be supplied. This will enable a landholder to prioritize personal, productive and natural resource management goals (along with financial factors) in a 3-5 year timeframe. With the past growing season being the third bad year in a row, expenditure on infrastructure needs to be prioritized to achieve the biggest gains to production and the environment, so right now is an excellent time to plan and budget.

The SA Murray Darling Basin NRM Board is further serving participating landholders by providing incentives to implement priority works on sites identified as high risk. Funds toward fencing and revegetating saline and recharge areas, watercourse fencing and water infrastructure are priorities. Any landholder interested in this invaluable program should contact Libby Lawson at Ellis Farm Consultancy to register.

Libby Lawson ph: 8389 9003 or email:
libby@ellisfarm.com.au



Purchase an aerial photo to illustrate your plans

Over The Hills & Plains by Email

Are you connected to the internet? Do you really need that paper edition of OTH&P?

Or could you manage with an electronic copy sent to you by email. Your email version has all the impact of full colour. Not only will it save paper, it also helps make our dollars spread further.

Please contact us at 8531 2077 or at
ehmp@internode.on.net
with your email address

Donations to the Gift Fund

Tax deductible donations may be made to the EHMPG Gift Fund. All funds go to on ground projects in our region.

Call Steve Coombe on 8531 2077 for more information.

Monarto Zoo's new Chimpanzee Habitat

Never before at Monarto have we had such a challenging project to bring to fruition as we now face with getting our new Chimpanzee habitat in place and operational.

Not only a complex but also Monarto's most expensive animal experience to date (the cost is around \$2mill), the Chimpanzee habitat will be used both to relocate our animals from Adelaide Zoo in much larger and more suitable surroundings and also to highlight the desperate plight that these, our closest of human relatives, have in the wild.

The design is based on the 'open range' Monarto concept and will give our chimps a huge 3000 square metre plus area to explore whilst guaranteeing a great visitor experience in all weather conditions.

Exhibiting any of the great apes demands a very complex set of criteria, not only to ensure their safe containment, but also to cater for their high level of intelligence. This in turn means a high level of enrichment is required and this will come both from their spacious natural surroundings and from what other 'special' enrichment practises are put in place for them by their primate keepers.

Two of our three chimpanzees at Adelaide (the females) have already gone to make a new home in at Hamilton Zoo in New Zealand and the other, a male, has already joined up with another male from Taronga Zoo in Adelaide. As soon as the chimp habitat is completed they will come up to Monarto and be joined by two more males from Wellington Zoo in New Zealand. And after they have been successfully introduced (and this can be a lengthy and complex procedure), four females will arrive from the Netherlands. After further introductions the group will then be allowed to breed and it is hoped that eventually Monarto will be home to a group of up to twenty chimpanzees.



Monarto currently supports Chimpanzee conservation in Africa through the Jane Goodall Foundation and we were lucky enough to have Jane bless the project late last year at an open day at Monarto Zoo attended by nearly 3,000 people.

The Chimpanzee building itself has been designed by Phillips Pilkington's of Adelaide and Monarto Zoo staff and was constructed by Harrold and Kite Pty Ltd and our special projects team. It provides a spacious climate controlled living space that allows the Chimpanzees freedom of access all day, especially important on those very hot or cold and windy days. Whilst in their house the chimps will still be able to be both seen and interacted with by visitors through 40mm thick glass viewing areas. A raised viewing platform and walkway gives great views of the habitat and surrounding areas.

A Chimpanzee habitat fund raising campaign has been started by Zoos SA and for those interested in helping out with this exciting new project a web page is available at www.primatroperty.com.au where you can purchase a piece of the 3,000sqm exhibit itself on line. All donations are fully tax deductible.

The project nears completion and we should hopefully have the first chimps at Monarto in April and all eight by the end of the year. For more information on our progress please visit our web site at www.zoossa.com.au

Peter Clark, Senior Curator, Zoos SA

Ferries MacDonald Road Freight Route

Improvements to the mentioned freight route will provide an obvious direct, safe transport route that would improve transport efficiencies (a reduced carbon footprint) and link to the bigger picture transport solutions for the state. It will benefit not only freight out of our region but importantly also the increasing freight in to the region.

In relation to the Langhorne Creek wine industry, up to 70-80% of fruit produced in the region is exported from the district largely to the Barossa, with wine and grape juice also transported to and from the region in bulk tankers. Vintages may produce up to 68,000 tonnes of fruit. A current primary transport route to the northern Barossa is via the Wellington and Brinkley Roads to the south west of the city of Murray Bridge then connecting to the Palmer Rd leading to the Barossa. An appropriate route via Ferries McDonald Rd would allow freight to pass directly to the Monarto interchange and Palmer Rd bypassing Murray Bridge. Currently the Ferries McDonald road is not used to a great extent, having limited suitability to heavy freight. As an unsealed road, spoilage and contamination of fresh wine grapes is a concern, not to mention reduced travel efficiency, safety and vehicle maintenance issues. In addition to wine grapes exported from the region, fruit also enters our region, largely from the Riverland, for processing at the major facilities of Langhorne Creek Winery and Belvidere Winery. It is strongly considered that an appropriately aligned, direct, sealed route between the Monarto interchange and Wellington Rd outside Langhorne Creek would be well received by the transport industry servicing our region.

Apart from the local wine industry the Peats Soil compost development on Kangaroo Rd is envisaged to attract an ever increasing stream of green waste from Adelaide, Mt Barker and ultimately Murray Bridge. The Ferries McDonald route would offer the most efficient, direct and safe transport of this product to the compost site via direct exit at the Monarto interchange from the freeway and alleviate a vast amount of traffic that, particularly from Adelaide and Mt Barker

districts, otherwise redirects via the Langhorne Creek Township. The Adelaide Hills districts continue to develop at a rapid rate and any means to reduce heavy transport traffic on the narrow, winding, often steep and populated roads from Mt Barker to Langhorne Creek would be most welcome. If the full capacity of the Peats Soil depot is realised the current route via Langhorne Creek for the bulk of the product will be untenable for our small town and its residents.

It would appear that a lot of money has been invested in the Monarto interchange providing a larger vision of linkages into a state plan for oversize and heavy vehicles to bypass Adelaide and feed into the 'dry goods hub' for the outer Murray Bridge and Monarto South area en-route to interstate destinations (refer the large Woolworths storage etc.) – sometimes referred to as the 'OD or over dimensional' route.

A direct sealed route along Kangaroo Rd via Ferries McDonald linking into the Monarto interchange is an obvious solution to immediate safety and efficiency pressures while harmonising with the larger vision for an interstate bulk transport route from Adelaide.

Lian Jaensch, Executive Officer,
Langhorne Creek Wine Industry Council
(08) 8537 3362

Carbon Accounting Old Revegetation Sites and Woodlots

We want your help to better understand carbon sequestration rates in old revegetation sites. As you're probably aware there are moves to introduce a national emissions trading scheme by 2010. There may be opportunities for woodlots and other revegetation sites in agricultural districts of South Australia to be included in future carbon accounting schemes. However, at present the growth rates and carbon stores from revegetation activities and woody crops are poorly understood - making it difficult for land managers and trading schemes to undertake accurate carbon accounting in your region.

To encourage more reliable carbon accounting assessments the Department of Water, Land and Biodiversity Conservation (DWLBC) is seeking to gather critical information on CO₂ sequestration rates from a range of woody crops and environmental plantings in the Eastern Hills and Murray Mallee regions. To do this we need to locate and measure native species woodlots, shelterbelts and mixed species revegetation that are 15+ years old. The process is fairly painless to landholders - we just seek your permission for our researchers to visit your revegetation sites and take a few measurements of your precious trees and shrubs. The hard part for our researchers is locating suitable sites across your region and that's where we need your help.

So if you have older woodlots and revegetation sites and want to support research and a better understanding of future carbon sequestration opportunities in your region please let us know.

Craig Neumann (Scientific Officer)
Department of Water, Land and
Biodiversity Conservation
ph: 8303 9512 or 0428 112 435
neumann.craig@saugov.sa.gov.au

New direction for Mt Pleasant Natural Resource Centre

Late last year the MPNRC ceased operating as a Committee of The Barossa Council, and achieved independent Incorporation status. This was rapidly followed by entry onto the Register of Environmental Organisations, and we are now a charitable group able to receive tax deductible donations.

The staff, volunteers and Management Committee of the MPNRC are an ambitious bunch who have committed to our new Community Environment Centre Project. This project will see nearly an acre of land developed into a community sustainability demonstration site. A project of this scale will require a considerable amount of investment: cash, sponsorship and people. As an incorporated group that can receive tax deductible donations we have expanded our pool of potential funding sources. We will also be establishing a "Friends of" group which will enable people to easily make monthly or yearly tax deductible contributions.....more on this to come.

As part of our strategy to realise this project we also need to build up our essential people resources. The MPNRC has always had excellent volunteer support and we are on the lookout to expand our family of 40 volunteers. We have restructured our volunteer program and now offer project based volunteering opportunities. Give me a call or an email if you would like to see the full list of positions or want more information on our volunteer program. Below are a couple of current vacancies.

Sponsorship Officer: This position requires a minimum 6 month commitment at 1-4 days /month (volunteer can choose the time commitment that suits them). The Sponsorship Officer will help finalise the MPNRC sponsorship pack, develop a sponsorship strategy, identify potential sponsors, and assist the MPNRC Management Committee and Coordinator in making approaches for sponsorship. Excellent communication skills required.

Volunteer Recruitment Officer: 1 – 2 days / month commitment is needed. The Volunteer Recruitment Officer will work with Sue our (volunteer) Assistant Volunteer Coordinator to develop volunteer recruitment strategies. This will involve helping identify volunteer opportunities at the MPNRC, develop volunteer projects and appropriate recruitment strategies such as advertising, mail outs etc. Good communication skills required.

The MPNRC will continue to offer its public reference and information service and deliver free workshops and forums. As stages of the Community Environment Centre Project are completed there will be more community facilities and increased information available at the Centre. Our restructured volunteer program also provides more support and meaningful contribution for volunteers.

In 2009 we will be completing our Water Efficiency project that will enable the site to run independent of mains. A lawned area at the front of the building will be

replaced with a sustainable water wise garden, and Mike our volunteer Garden Interpretation Officer is currently working on informative signage for this area. An area around a couple of big Red Gums on the site will be revegetated to help ameliorate years of soil compaction and provide additional habitat for our birds, butterflies and lizards. A group of high school students are using the site as part of the Doorways 2 Construction program to help retrofit a shed for new meeting room and workshop facilities. Marilyn, our volunteer School Day Assistant Event Coordinator is busy planning our now bi-annual Sustainable School Days for the 17th & 18th September. This huge project culminates in 1000 primary school students from the region coming to Mt Pleasant to participate in activities and workshops focused on Sustainability. If you would like to help out with this event we would love to hear from you - there are a number of volunteer positions available that help make these special days happen.

Faye Mc Goldrick, MPNRC Inc.
Coordinator ph: 8568 1907 or
email: mpnrc@bigpond.com



"The MPNRC sustainable native garden is coping well with the drought conditions with minimal watering - only watered twice in February (photo taken 27th Feb). This year the MPNRC will be planting out another water wise garden to replace a lawn area and help reduce the sites water consumption."

Times change – lets move on

The Tungkillo Landcare Group has been around now for 20 years. So its perhaps no surprise that it recently did a bit of navel gazing and contemplated if there really is any longer a need for such a group given that there is a LAP Group and an NRM Board out there saving the environment.

It did not take too long for the newly elected committee to agree that there is still a role for a very local group to take on some of the very local issues. But the clear message was that we want to be doers, not just talkers.

The main issues that the Landcare Group wants to get stuck into immediately are:

Woody weeds (e.g. furze, broom, briar) on roadsides – lets get rid of the lot

Pasture trials with new-generation legumes (working with SARDI)

Liming to correct soil acidity (working with DWLBC)

Continue reveg activities with Electranet and assist other members (Neil Hodge is again propagating thousands of seedlings)

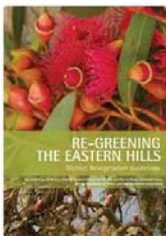
Some time ago the Tungkillo Landcare Group (with funding support from Eastern Hills & Murray Plains CG and DWLBC) began producing a reveg guide for locals. There is any number of revegetation guides for landholders keen to get into 'greening' the landscape, and some are very good. So why would we produce another one? The Landcare Group decided that what was needed here was something customised to our particular local scene.

This area is 'special' for a number of reasons – it sits in a rain shadow, so conditions can vary markedly over short distances; the landscape offers challenges with hills and valleys, salty streams and of course lots of rock; many commercial farms are being subdivided as new landholders move in, often with limited experience in land management but with lofty dreams. Many members of the Landcare Group have accumulated experience in reveg over the past two decades – they have learned as much from their mistakes as from their successes and it seemed a good thing to pass on these lessons so others don't have to reinvent the wheel.

Having said the area is 'special', it also shares a lot in common with that band of country that runs more or less north-south from Keyneton down to Wistow and east-west from Rockleigh to Mt Torrens: similar landscape, climate, soils and of course vegetation. As a result, it has turned into a guide for 'The Eastern Hills'.

So there are a lot of people and groups that might find this booklet useful as a guide to:
design options for good results;
species best suited to the area;
methods and techniques for high chances of success; and
management and habitat enhancement of older revegetation sites.

The Reveg Guide is just about there - look out for it at the Mt Pleasant Show!
Bruce Munday, Tungkillo Landcare Group



Committee Members

Don Noblet OAM, Chairman Tungkillo	Inez Bormann Cambrai	Roger Lillecrapp Keyneton	Michael Seager Mt Pleasant
Maurice Collins Tungkillo	Leith Davis Palmer	Jenni London Sanderston	Pat Wundersitz Springton
Chris Hebart Mt Pleasant	Tim Jenkins Murray Bridge	June Phillips Murray Bridge	Gavin Smith Mannum

David Lillecrapp OAM
Eden Valley

Contacts

Caloote Area Landcare Group, Bev Connell 8570 4322

Eastern Hills & Murray Plains Catchment Group, Steve Coombe 8531 2077

Marne North Rhine Saunders Catchment Group, Inez Bormann 8564 5013

Monarto Landholders Environmental Group, Ian Bates 8532 5884

Monarto South Residents Group, Emilis Prelgauskas 0415 631 713

Ranges to River Group, Debbie Wilkinson 8532 1432

Rockleigh Mypolonga Native Vegetation Association, Grant Lomman 0402 860 292

SAMDB NRM Board, Reception 8532 1432

Spring Valley Landcare Group, Robert Clarke 8568 2864

Tungkillo Landcare Group, Paul Edwards 8389 422



For direct mailout of Over The Hills & Plains newsletter

I wish to be added to the mailing list

I wish to be taken off the mailing list

Name.....

Address.....

.....

.....Postcode.....

Return to:

Eastern Hills & Murray Plains CG

PO Box 2056

Murray Bridge SA 5253

ph: 08 8531 2077

fax: 08 8532 5300

