

VICTORIAN

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& CATCHMENT MANAGEMENT



REVEGETATION FEATURE

Jarrahmond biolink brings back the birds

Planning large-scale revegetation projects

Biorich plantations – theory and practice



Victorian Landcare and Catchment Management

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River red gums at Hattah Lakes by Tracey Koper.

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The Anderson's Creek Catchment Area Landcare Group organised the edible weeds day which included a cook-up and tasting of local weeds.



Species selection is critical when planning large-scale revegetation projects.



Revegetation works at Nurcough will help to reconnect important habitat for the nationally vulnerable Mallee fowl.



From the Minister

In this issue, the magazine takes a road trip around the state to learn about the important on-ground work Victorian Landcarers are doing to improve our land – one plant at a time.

The magazine visits the red gum woodlands in the Western District, before heading over to check out a biolink project in the Wimmera that connects with the Little Desert National Park and then on to the river flats bordering the Snowy River to learn more about some of the transformational revegetation projects that are underway.

The one common thread in each of these successful, yet highly diverse, revegetation projects is that they all involve partnerships that link community groups with organisations. Drawing on local knowledge and experience, these groups are all achieving great outcomes for the environment. This is something that I am passionate about and that you will see consistently come through all of our actions, whether at a policy level or through practical on-ground activities.

Every tree, bush or grass that goes into the ground makes a difference to the health of our environment, and I was delighted with the announcement that the Peninsula Link project has secured one of the biggest native vegetation offset deals in Victoria's history.

More than 1.7 million trees, plants and shrubs will be planted along the project corridor and new wetlands will be created to treat water run-off from the freeway and provide valuable habitat for local fauna.

The project will protect more than 50 habitat hectares of native vegetation as offsets for vegetation cleared during the Peninsula Link construction. This is a practical example of how we can balance the need for Victoria to invest in new infrastructure to meet population growth, with the importance of protecting and giving back to the local environment.

The rise of large-scale landscape revegetation projects, which connect areas of remnant vegetation and create important habitat for biodiversity, offers a unique challenge and opportunity for all of us involved in caring for our environment.

More great work is about to begin, with the announcement of the successful Communities for Nature small grant applicants. Check the DSE website for the full list of recipients and stay tuned for the opening of the next round of grants.

The Victorian Landcare Awards are being held here in Melbourne this year. Nominations are now open, so start thinking about who you will put forward for their outstanding contribution to the environment – for more information visit the Landcare Gateway at www.landcarevic.net.au

Ryan Smith
Minister for Environment and
Climate Change

Reader survey results

By John Robinson

The results are in from our recent reader survey and they continue to reveal a large readership for the magazine. More than 60 per cent of readers who completed the survey share their copy of the magazine, usually with one or two other people.

There were 406 responses to the reader survey. Readers were invited to complete the survey either online, or via the hard copy survey that was included in issue 55.

Magazine readers are typically more than 45 years of age, identify themselves as lifestyle or hobby farmers, live in rural areas and are members of a Landcare or similar group.

Readers identified that they preferred practical stories in the magazine on innovative approaches or how to achieve best practice. The most popular topics are on pest plants and animals, biodiversity conservation and sustainable agriculture.

The survey also asked respondents to comment on the main challenges facing Landcare. The stand-out issues included: the challenge of finding and engaging new volunteers, particularly young people; the need to keep current members and volunteers engaged and energised; securing funding and ensuring it is directed to on-ground works; pest plants and animals; and the need to continue to raise awareness about Landcare and the environment in the wider community.

The results of the reader survey will be used to guide the direction of future issues.

David Lancashire won the survey prize and has donated the \$500 to the Balcombe and Moorooduc Landcare Group. Paul Spiers received six bottles of Tahbilk Marsanne from Tahbilk Winery, while third prize winner Pamela McKimmie received a copy of *Birdscaping Australian Gardens – A Guide to Native Plants and the Birds they Attract*, by George Adams.

Thank you to everyone who responded to the survey. Thanks also to Vanessa Marrama for assisting with collating the reader survey data.

For further information contact John Robinson from DSE's Community Engagement and Landcare Team on 9637 9824 or john.robinson@dse.vic.gov.au

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*There are many paths
to achieving a grand vision
for landscape restoration.*

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Minister for Environment and Climate Change Ryan Smith (at left) and John Cutler, Chair of the Grow West Implementation Committee, plant Grow West's one millionth tree at Myrniong last year.

Ten years of positive partnerships for Grow West

By Helena Lindorff

The Minister for Environment and Climate Change, Ryan Smith, planted Grow West's one millionth tree last July and the celebrations are set to continue in 2013 as the project reaches its 10th year.

Grow West was born from the need to find solutions to land management issues in the Upper Werribee catchment, west of Melbourne. The area was suffering from loss of natural and agricultural assets, weed and rabbit infestation, loss of biodiversity, soil erosion and poor water quality.

Local Landcare groups, landholders, government and non-government agencies got together to brainstorm practical ways of addressing the problems and Grow West was created. Grow West helps to build the capacity, knowledge and experience of local Landcare groups so they can feel confident in co-ordinating small to large projects on their own, with assistance and advice from Grow West where required.

Grow West's grand vision is to rejuvenate 10,000 hectares of the Upper Werribee

catchment by connecting large areas of public reserves: Brisbane Ranges National Park, Werribee Gorge State Park and Lerderderg State Park, through a mosaic of restoration works on private property.

A project of this scale involves many groups and organisations working at a community level so fostering effective partnerships is critical to the project's success.

The Whitehorse Creek Biolink project is a good example of the Grow West approach. During the next 12 months the project will see six kilometres of waterway fenced and 58 hectares of revegetation. Pest plants and animals will be treated and a 30-hectare area of remnant vegetation will be protected by a Trust for Nature covenant. The project will also work on capacity building for the local Landcare group. The biolink stems from a partnership developed between Grow West, Melbourne Water, Rowsley Landcare Group and Trust for Nature with funding from DSE's Vision for Werribee Plains.

Over the past 10 years Grow West has co-ordinated a score of projects, all of them with different partnership models. The best partnerships have been those that involve local Landcare groups. The groups have shared their local knowledge of the environment, connected with landholders and contractors and provided advice and assistance with on-ground works.

There are many paths to achieving a grand vision for landscape restoration. Partnerships develop and grow, knowledge of best practice is forever expanding and the skills acquired are constantly growing and being shared among the local community. Grow West is hopeful that whenever someone looks over their neighbour's fence and observes the restoration works being done they will come to share the vision.

For further information contact Helena Lindorff at Port Philip and Westernport CMA at helena.lindorff@ppwcm.vic.gov.au or go to the Grow West website at www.growwest.com.au

Friends of the Organ Pipes

40th anniversary

By Robert Bender

Before the Organ Pipes National Park was proclaimed in 1972 it was a wasteland of farm rubbish, noxious weeds, rabbits and foxes. In the 40 years since, the tiny park has doubled in size and been restored to natural bushland, with many species of flora and fauna re-establishing in the area.

In November 2012 Parks Victoria joined with Friends of the Organ Pipes (FOOP) to celebrate the restoration of the park and its place in the local community. The Minister for Environment and Climate Change, Ryan Smith, presented an award to the Friends group for 40 years of service in the restoration effort and a special lifetime achievement award to Don Marsh, co-founder of the Friends group in 1970.

The day was designed for the whole community and a crowd of several

hundred people enjoyed the stalls, guided walks, a talk about the park's bat box project, an animal display by Wild Action, free plants from Western Plains Flora and the presentation of the awards.

FOOP convener Terry Lane paid tribute to the founders of the group.

"The day cannot go by without remembering those first Friends of the Organ Pipes: Don Marsh, Barry Kemp, Carl Rayner and the park's first ranger, Jack Lyale, after whom this visitors' centre has been renamed.

"These men had the vision and enthusiasm that inspired others to take up the challenge to help restore and protect not only flora and fauna reserves and bushland, but also cultural, historic and scenic sites,



The Connies, a collective of tram conductors, performers, educators, ecologists and nature lovers, spread the environmental message at the Organ Pipes celebration.

so that today there are hundreds of Friends and Landcare group members working alongside state and local government bodies," Terry said.

Several past rangers-in-charge also revisited the park for the celebration including Craig Bray and Fiona Smith along with other rangers, who brought their children to enjoy the day.

Edible weeds capture community interest

By Stephen Gleeson

The Anderson's Creek Catchment Area Landcare Group (ACCA) came up with a novel way of reigniting community interest in weed control and raising the profile of the group by holding an edible weeds day last September.

The idea was sparked after hearing Doris Pozzi discussing her book, *Edible Weeds*

and *Garden Plants of Melbourne*, on the radio. The group made contact with Doris and invited her to speak at an edible weeds day.

Doris gracefully accepted the invitation, the local newspaper was contacted and two weeks before the day Doris met with a journalist and photographer to conduct

a weed cook-up. This resulted in a feature article in the local newspaper which created a great deal of local interest.

More than 70 people attended the edible weeds day. Doris Pozzi led the participants through a heavily weed infested area near the local supermarket at Warrandyte. Doris identified the weeds, explained the ways they can be cooked and eaten and discussed their health benefits. She also fielded many questions from the audience. After the tour a number of different weeds were cooked and tasted.

The day was a great success. Participants were fascinated by the concept of eating common weeds with many of them wanting to both eat and learn more.

The benefits of the day for ACCA included a number of new members joining, an increase in attendance at other ACCA events and a raised profile for Landcare in the community.

For further information contact Stephen Gleeson by email at gleeson@ozonline.com.au



Doris Pozzi identifies edible weeds for interested community members at Warrandyte.

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These biorich plantations feature locally indigenous or exotic timber trees that are included within the structure of biologically rich forests or woodlands.

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Farm foresters (from left) Mark Feltrin, Anthony Dufty, Ian Penna and Phil Kinghorn with a two-year-old silver wattle at the ImLal biorich plantation site in 2012.

Biorich plantations – putting the

When you talk about timber plantations with farmers the first thing they often think about is large areas of pines or blue gums spread over farmland. Plantings designed for environmental values aren't always popular either because they can take up commercially valuable land. So how can Landcarers shift these perceptions about the consequences of putting more trees back into agricultural land?

The Ballarat Region Treegrowers (BRT) is promoting the concept of biorich plantations as a bridge between forestry and Landcare plantings to deliver both financial and environmental benefits.

BRT is the local branch of Australian Forest Growers, which represents Australian private forestry interests. It coined the term biorich plantation to represent the kind of layered, diverse forest cover that could be created by applying the *Blueprint for Sustainability Score Sheet* for Landcare plantings developed by Teesdale nurseryman Stephen Murphy.

Design principles for Landcare plantings

Stephen Murphy developed the score sheet index during the 1990s through his nursery and tree planting work. The score sheet is a guiding blueprint.

Ten design principles are grouped to address four issues important to the long-term ecological value of the plantings: diversity; structure; species survival; and, location. The physical and biological characteristics of the planting are weighted according to the points available for each design principle. The higher the score, the more a landholder's planting is considered to have ecological value and survivability.

BRT worked with Stephen Murphy to publish his ideas in a book – *Recreating the Country*, released in 2009. The book examines how commercial wood production might be integrated into the planning framework.

These biorich plantations feature locally indigenous or exotic timber trees that are included within the structure of biologically rich forests or woodlands. The plantations more closely resemble native forests or woodlands than commercial wood plantations.

Biorich plantations align with the concept of analogue forestry that was developed in Sri Lanka by modifying traditional village gardens. The originators of analogue forestry wanted to tackle the social and environmental problems resulting from exploitative land management, including

shifting cultivation and industrial style agriculture using monocultures.

The analogue forestry model recognises the value of lost ecosystems, restores productive capacity to the land, brings in genetic diversity, establishes protective vegetation layers and gives local people more control over their way of life and natural resources – especially food and building materials.

Model plantation at Lal Lal

BRT was keen to put these ideas into practice by establishing a model biorich plantation. Imreys Minerals Australia provided 10 hectares of land in the buffer zone around an old clay mine pit near the town of Lal Lal, south-east of Ballarat.

A Caring for our Country grant, along with input from Central Highlands Water, Australian Forest Growers and BRT members saw local volunteers plant the first five-hectare site in 2010, and launch the ImLal Biorich Demonstration Project. The second five-hectare site was established in 2011 with further replanting and direct seeding in 2012.

Both sites contain a diverse mix of species mainly endemic to the area, with as many layers as possible – grasses and shrubs through to larger understorey and canopy



A corner of the ImLal south site demonstrating species diversity: cassinia, wattle and eucalypts with remnant roadside woodland in the background.

theory into practice

By Ian Penna and Gib Wettenhall

trees. Plant species were clumped to help pollination and create vegetation layers and natural regeneration of local species is encouraged. Weed spraying, thinning and possibly grazing and fire will form part of the ongoing management.

The sites contain a proportion of commercial timber trees in different layouts. The first site has 12 native forestry species in large clumps along an access track. At the second site, forestry trees are in strips along, and branching off, the access track. They will be managed through pruning and thinning to produce fuel wood after a few years, then good quality sawlogs in the long term.

Monitoring directs management

Monitoring the plantation's growth and the changing fauna helps understand the changing relationships between the soil, water, plants and animals, and acts as a means of directing management activities. Bird surveys have been conducted through the buffer zone and plantation sites with a total of 60 species having been observed so far.

Biorich plantations open up new ways of creating healthy and productive rural landscapes. An important challenge is to develop ideas for integrating commercial products other than timber into the

concept. This might mean exploiting the grassland or understorey layer for fodder or bush tucker, or designing forest cover to favour different livestock species.

The ImLal Biorich Plantation Project is still in its early stages. We hope it will demonstrate that holistically combined native and exotic species to achieve both conservation and commercial goals could help make rural communities and landscapes more economically and environmentally resilient.

BRT has been discussing the potential for establishing further biorich plantations in the Ballarat area with other organisations and we are seeking funding for a film on land restoration and analogue forestry.

Ian Penna is secretary and Gib Wettenhall is treasurer of the Ballarat Region Treegrowers. For further information visit the biorich plantation website at www.biorichplantations.com/



Tanya Loos leading an early bird survey in the first biorich plantation site.

Landholders build a biolink to bring birds back to Jarrahmond

By Penny Gray

For more than 20 years members of the Jarrahmond Landcare Group have worked steadily to protect and restore native vegetation and promote sustainable agriculture on the river flats and surrounding hills bordering the Snowy River in far east Gippsland.

A strong desire to see native birds return to the area prompted this ambitious project. By fencing out livestock and restoring native plants the group has been able to reconnect biodiversity-rich areas isolated by land clearing. They have conserved vital wildlife habitat for threatened bird species including the powerful owl and sooty owl as well as the endangered long-footed potoroo and the solitary spot-tailed quoll.

The project formally got underway in 2003 when the group developed a plan to reconnect restored and remnant native vegetation sites in the area and to create a corridor between the Yalmy State Forest and the Snowy River. The plan had a twofold purpose – beyond the development of wildlife corridors it also aimed to promote sustainable agriculture. The project became known locally as the linkages project.

Various sources of funding have supported tree planting, fencing, off-stream watering infrastructure, field days and the purchase of aerial photographs to help the group plan and prioritise works across the 4800-hectare region. The group has formed partnerships with Parks Victoria, DSE, DPI, East Gippsland CMA and the Australian Government Envirofund. Greening Australia has contributed critical expertise and volunteers from the Orbost Youth Club, Forestech TAFE, Orbost Secondary College and the Snowy River Campus of the School for Student Leadership have helped to plant many trees.

According to former chair and landholder Rob Hescok, 22 landholders have participated in the project.

“Together we’ve put up about 35 kilometres of fencing across the lower catchment of the Snowy River,” Rob said.

“It’s only a small community and some are absentee landholders who come down on weekends to do their bit. Our whole family is committed to and participates in improving biodiversity by linking up and



Peter Honey heading out to plant trees on land overlooking the fertile Snowy River flats.

enlarging the bushland that remains on our farm.”

Since 2003, the group has planted nearly 30,000 trees across private properties, with all landholders signing agreements to maintain the new fences and manage threats by removing weeds and pest animals and preventing or minimising grazing.



Members of the Jarrahmond Landcare Group celebrate the launch of the Birds of Jarrahmond brochure.



A rainbow lorikeet in the new plantings at Jarrahmond.

Field days have been held on seed collection and using GPS technology. The aim is to create a strong store of local knowledge about how to manage and improve the health of native vegetation.

Birds are a marker for success

According to local Angus cattle producer and long-standing Jarrahmond Landcare Group secretary Jeanette Honey, the farmers have planted trees for a number of reasons.

"Farmers have seen the benefits in being more sustainable, providing shelter for stock, managing erosion, improving water quality and dealing with other problems such as salinity, as well as contributing to the beauty of the area. The idea of preserving the habitat for our abundant and colourful local flora and fauna is never far from our minds."

Jeanette says the project has encouraged the group to develop a practical understanding of what biolinking is and what it can achieve.

"Biolinking for us means linking up natural areas with trees to preserve our biodiversity. Tree plantings or corridors may link with one another across and between farms, with roadside vegetation, with remnant plots of older trees and with wet areas or waterways.

"Reptiles, amphibians, mammals, insects, plants and birds use the corridors. Some species can travel short distances from one plot to another or use paddock trees as stepping stones."

The Jarrahmond Landcare Group is using bird species to measure the success of the project. Community members were invited to contribute to a bird list as a way of benchmarking current species and measuring biodiversity.

In 2008 a brochure, *The Birds of Jarrahmond*, was produced with more than 120 photographs sourced and donated by the people of Gippsland. The brochure is a portable and durable identification tool. A bookmark with the complete list of 159 birds was also produced.

According to Jeanette Honey, birds are a high profile indicator species of biodiversity and good ecosystem health.

By fencing out livestock and restoring native plants the group has been able to reconnect biodiversity-rich areas isolated by land clearing.

"It is essential to learn what bird species exist before we can measure what changes occur in the environment in the future. Jarrahmond has wetland, woodland, forest and riparian zones along with open pastures. Such a variety of habitat has meant we have a wonderful mix of species.

"The bird project was a pleasure. Local ornithologists and photographers gave generously of their knowledge and talents, group members developed skills in identification and it was such an achievement for us to have done it largely with local input."

Penny Gray is the Far East Victoria Landcare Facilitator. For further information contact Penny by email at penny.gray@dpi.vic.gov.au

Meet the Jarrahmond Landcare Group

The group was formed in the late 1980s and became incorporated in 1992. Membership has steadily grown and the group has become an important part of the social structure of the community. The group's first major project was a co-ordinated erosion control effort along Gunns Creek.

The Linkages Project is only one focus for the group. Other projects include maintaining the Jarrahmond Avenue of

Honour, dung beetle releases, the birds of Jarrahmond project, mistletoe control, silage wrap recycling and fox baiting programs.

The group has also formed a partnership with the Orbost Men's Shed, making nest boxes for barn owls to encourage them to nest in the area.

The group won the Victorian Protection of the Environment Award at the Sustainable Communities Tidy Towns Awards in 2009.

Strath Creek landholders link up fragments

By Stephen Joblin

The Strath Creek Landcare Group is underway on a project aimed at increasing the connectivity of fragmented vegetation within their local landscape.

The project plans to reconnect the Mount Disappointment State Forest through private land to Coonan's Reserve on King Parrot Creek.

The woodlands and forests that once covered the steep hills and valleys of the middle and lower King Parrot Creek catchment have largely disappeared. This native habitat played an important role in stabilising the soil, allowing rainfall to recharge groundwater, inhibiting the spread of weeds, providing clean water and a home to hundreds of species of birds, frogs, reptiles and mammals. The vegetation also stored large amounts of carbon.

The project focuses on six properties in the Strath Creek – Flowerdale area. Three of the properties were involved in the 2009 Black Saturday fires. A grant from the Australian Government Clean Energy Future Biodiversity Fund is supporting the project with landholders and volunteers also contributing funds and labour.

A modified grazing regime across 50 hectares of steep hills will be used to promote grassy ground cover and allow natural regeneration of native vegetation. At least 20 hectares of high quality remnant native vegetation will be protected and an additional 40 hectares of steep hills will be revegetated using direct seeding. Pest plant and animal control will be conducted across all of the sites along with flora and fauna monitoring.

Local demonstration sites and field days will allow the local community to investigate the different ways of managing steep hill country. As the project progresses its use of revegetation and grazing management to gain carbon credits will be investigated.

Works are now underway on fencing some of the very steep country and tackling blackberry infestations. The Upper Goulburn Landcare Network Fire Recovery Project team has been organising corporate volunteers to assist with the



Pam and Wayne Watson celebrate completing 650 metres of fencing along Watson's Creek that flows through their property at Flowerdale.

project. Many of these volunteers have been working enthusiastically in the area since the 2009 fires.

The Landcare group is working alongside the volunteers and aims to plant 10,000 seedlings in the project area this season.

Stephen Joblin is the project manager for the Strath Creek Biodiversity Project which is overseen by the Upper Goulburn Landcare Network. For further information go to www.strathcreekbp.wordpress.com

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The project plans to reconnect the Mount Disappointment State Forest through private land to Coonan's Reserve on King Parrot Creek.

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Volunteers from Ernst and Young worked for more than six hours straight last December. The group carried steel posts across steep terrain and strung wires through two kilometres of fencing.



A new website will allow locals to record and map the movements of koalas in the Strzelecki Ranges.

The Strzelecki koalas may be more robust than other populations and better able to withstand future threats such as climate change and disease.

New mapping tool for Strzelecki koalas

By Kathleen Bartlett

The South Gippsland Landcare Network has created an online mapping tool to help the community monitor the Strzelecki koala. Studies have proven that koalas found in the Strzelecki Ranges are genetically unique as they have a greater genetic diversity to other koala populations in Victoria.

The online mapping tool is part of the four-year Friends of Strzelecki Koala Habitat for Life project funded by the Victorian Government's Communities for Nature grant program. The project aims to improve koala habitat in the Strzelecki Ranges through on-ground works on private properties across South Gippsland, as well as to increase public awareness of koala populations through an education and citizen ecologist program.

By logging on to the Friends of Strzelecki Koala's website, locals can record where they have seen koalas, what the koala was doing and how it looked. Photographs of koala sightings can also be added.

The mapping tool allows the South Gippsland Landcare Network to see where koalas are and to monitor how this distribution is changing as more revegetation and remnant vegetation

protection projects take place. This information will then be fed into the Victorian Biodiversity Atlas and contribute to an improved understanding of koalas across Victoria.

Hunting and habitat loss caused Victorian koala numbers to fall dramatically low in the late 19th century. Koalas were moved from populations with a very low genetic diversity on Phillip and French Islands to the rest of the state. These koalas thrived and are now the source of most koalas in Victoria, with the exception of populations in the Strzelecki Ranges.

The Strzelecki koalas may be more robust than other populations and better able to withstand future threats such as climate change and disease. There is little understanding of the exact distribution of the Strzelecki koala population and how they interact with other populations of koalas.

The citizen ecologist program has also included workshops on how to spot, monitor and help sick koalas. Volunteers can also assist a Monash University study on the genetic diversity of the koala by collecting koala scats.

Other activities undertaken by the Friends of the Strzelecki Koala have included a roadshow visiting five schools, a stall for the Great Victorian Bike Ride at Mirboo North and supplying every member of the Landcare network with a fridge magnet with details on how to record a koala sighting.

For more information or to contribute your sightings of a koala in South Gippsland go to www.fosk.org.au or contact Kathleen Bartlett on 5662 5759.

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Anticipation is a key element of the planning process. Local-provenance seed has to be secured up to a year in advance.

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Members of the Nungurner Landcare Group ready to start clearing and planting.

Planning revegetation projects –

Revegetating with indigenous seedlings is a core activity for many of Victoria's Landcare networks. Since the late 1990s the East Gippsland Landcare Network (EGLN) has been supporting members and groups to carry out revegetation activities on private land as well as a number of public reserves.

Over the past five years 400 members and groups associated with EGLN have planted 300,000 indigenous seedlings, creating more than 330 hectares of revegetation. It's not hard to understand why revegetation is such a focus for the network – an estimated 70 per cent of private land has been cleared of indigenous vegetation within the region, with the red gum plains particularly affected.

Surrounding areas have suffered from urban development, clear felling of forests, the spread of weeds and introduced pests, and an altered fire regime, all of which have impacted on the region's biodiversity. In addition, EGLN's southern boundary is the RAMSAR-listed Gippsland Lakes, Australia's largest inland waterway.

Planning and carrying out a large-scale revegetation program is involved and lengthy. It begins far in advance of the first seedlings reaching the hands of the Landcarers.

The first issue is funding. EGLN has sourced a variety of state and federal grants. Our current order of seedlings is supported by funding from Caring for our Country and the Victorian Government's Communities for Nature grants program. The seedlings supplied in 2012 were financed by eight different grants.

Securing seed in advance

Anticipation is a key element of the planning process. Local-provenance seed has to be secured up to a year in advance.

Fortunately for EGLN, an excellent relationship with Greening Australia means that most of the seed required can be sourced easily. We have also been working with a local grower to develop a permanent seed orchard, which will ensure a reliable supply of seed for some of the lilies and flowers that once typified the red gum plains.

Tenders for the seedlings are sent out to commercial nurseries nearly a year prior to delivery, and a good working relationship between a network or group and the growers is essential. We rely on their experience and advice, as well as their knowledge and flexibility. Our growers will start sowing the winter germinating species before tenders and subsequent contracts for the following year have been issued.



Some of the 70,000 seedlings to be planted in East Gippsland this year.

Species selection is critical. Traditionally, Landcare revegetation schemes were limited to a restricted number of eucalypt and acacia species.

Selecting diverse plant forms and species

EGLN embraces a diverse revegetation ethos, currently supplying 80 different species, including grasses and flowers. Biodiverse native vegetation is self-regenerating and inherently more resilient to pests and extreme weather,



Forestech TAFE students finish a Landcare planting at the Rijs property at Nicholson.

the East Gippsland experience

By Paul Harvey

having evolved to cope with Australia's highly variable climate. Using as diverse a range of plant forms and species should be a fundamental consideration in any revegetation program.

Local knowledge is also essential. Within the EGLN area there are four broad environmental zones: high country, lowlands and foothills, red gum plains and riparian and Gippsland Lakes. Species which are common across the zones are particularly useful.

Site visits and spreadsheets

EGLN members participate in an annual expression of interest for seedlings. Most successful applicants receive a site visit to discuss the landholder's aims and to go over the practical issues, such as preparation, suitable species, weeds and browsing pests. Site visits provide an opportunity to educate landholders about good planting practice, with further advice given in writing.

EGLN also runs a revegetation workshop at the start of each planting season. Our quarterly magazine, *The Kingfisher*, contains planting suggestions, as do a series of *Practical Landcare Guides* that the network has recently published.

The next step is arranging where and when the distribution of seedlings will take place

and notifying the Landcarers. With four weeks left we get final numbers of seedlings by species from the growers, and a spreadsheet is used to allocate the seedlings. This is based on which species would naturally occur on any given site, what we actually have, what the landholder wants to achieve and what has been requested.

During distribution week the seedlings arrive and are grouped into species. Stakes and tree guards are on hand and the Landcarers are provided with a date and time for collection.

It's a busy but satisfying time preparing the numerous orders for collection.

This might be the end of the planning process, but in many ways it's the beginning of the revegetation project. The hard work of site preparation, planting, maintenance, mapping and reporting is still ahead.

Paul Harvey is the Group Co-ordinator for EGLN. Email paul.harvey@dpi.vic.gov.au for more information. Copies of the EGLN newsletters are at egl.org.au/newsletters/



The Friends of Picnic Point Landcare Group are restoring rainforest vegetation at Owlers Patch, west Bairnsdale.

Gettin' Dirty with the Friends of Cornish Hill

By Anna Gooch-Andrew

The Friends of Cornish Hill, near Daylesford, have been working with students from Daylesford Secondary College to rehabilitate the land around Smiths Creek.

Four years ago the creek was smothered by three-metre-high blackberries, broom and gorse, along with hawthorns and elderberries. The Friends of Cornish Hill have spent countless hours removing the invasive weeds and replacing them with indigenous plants and grasses.

Last year the Friends were assisted by a group of local students involved in the Gettin' Dirty project, an initiative of Senior Constable Jim Ross, Youth Resource Officer with Moorabool Police.

The objectives of Gettin' Dirty are for each student involved to achieve success, gain self-esteem, improve their social skills and increase their connection to their local community. The project involves taking a small group of boys from years seven and eight out of the classroom and into the community.

The boys were scheduled to spend two days with the Friends of Cornish Hill, but instead they spent an extra day at Smiths Creek when another school group cancelled at the last minute.

According to Margie Thomas, secretary of the Friends of Cornish Hill, the boys came to the rescue.

"With a whole lot of trees and grasses ready to go we were stuck. We needed help and called the boys on a whim to ask if they could help. They said yes! It is a tribute to them and to the project just how willing they were to assist. They did some good work in hard conditions."

The Gettin' Dirty group planted more than 250 trees and grasses. The project helped raise the profile of the group and



The Gettin' Dirty group trial the use of old carpet as weed mats – a cheap and effective way of controlling weeds.

showcased Cornish Hill to a new sector of the community.

Margie Thomas says the Friends are looking forward to being involved in the program again this year.

"One of the joys of the project lies in getting the students outdoors and learning hands-on skills such as plant identification and revegetation techniques. It shows that there is success in using your hands."

Western District farmers preserve iconic red gums By Deborah Howcroft

The remnant red gum woodlands of the Western District are being protected and extended as farmers fence remnant paddock trees and enhance them with supplementary revegetation.



Scott Farquharson has established three direct seeding sites on his property at Wando Bridge to protect and extend remnant red gum woodlands.

Funded by Caring for our Country, the Glenelg Hopkins CMA's Red Gum Woodlands Project is now in its fourth year.

The remnant red gums are an icon that are easily recognisable in the local landscape and are part of the cultural and natural heritage of the region. The project is conserving and extending the extent of remnant woodlands on private land by raising awareness and knowledge of biodiversity risks and supporting sustainable farm practices.

According to project co-ordinator Tania Parker, works have been completed in the Dunkeld, Wando Vale and Portland areas.

"The focus for last year has been protection of paddock red gums in the Panyyabyr district near Hamilton and Wando Vale, north of Casterton. Many of the fencing sites that are protecting red gums are already established. Landholders planted and direct seeded to complete the remaining sites."

Works on Scott Farquharson's property at Wando Bridge have established three direct seeding sites to create 20-metre-wide corridors of linked vegetation. Another two sites have been established to protect unstable ridges and slopes on the property.

In total, there will be 3000 plants and 13.5 kilometres of direct seeding covering 17 hectares at the Farquharson property.

Assistance with planting trees on the steep slopes has been provided by the Victorian Government's Flood Relief Employment Program and delivered by the Glenelg Hopkins CMA and Conservation Volunteers Australia.

For further information contact Tania Parker at Glenelg Hopkins CMA on 5571 2526.

A blueprint for the Loddon Plains

By Anthony Gallacher

One of the challenges in creating a connected landscape in the heart of an agricultural region is that landscape change must be in harmony with agriculture.

The Loddon Plains Landcare Network (LPLN) has spent two years putting together a strategic Blueprint for Action. The blueprint outlines the network area, its focus, its biodiversity elements and potential revegetation and landscape restoration projects. It is part of the LPLN

GOANNA Project – Group Organised Action Nurturing Natural Assets.

The Blueprint for Action booklet will be shown to potential public and private sector investors as a business model to demonstrate that the network has thought strategically about landscape restoration and improving environmental outcomes.

The network has also launched a new website that provides easy access to the blueprint and includes a monthly newsletter and the LPLN blog. The

network is using the blueprint to focus on developing larger scale project proposals including revegetation corridors across the Loddon Plains.

The network is supported by the Norman Wettenhall Foundation, the Victorian Government through the Victorian Local Landcare Facilitator Initiative and the North Central CMA.

Anthony Gallacher is LPLN's Landcare Facilitator. For further information go to www.lpln.org

Volunteers treat mange in wombats

By Jenny Mattingley

Volunteer wildlife carers have developed a burrow flap method to treat wombats infested with mange mite.

Volunteer wildlife carers have developed a burrow flap method to treat wombats infested with mange mite. Mange is thought to be spread by foxes which are known to frequent wombat burrows. The mange mite burrows under the skin and unless treated the infestation progresses until eventually the wombat dies.

Wombats need to be treated for mange in the wild. The Wombat Protection Society in NSW has been using the burrow flap method to treat mange in wombats since 2007.



A wombat severely infested with mange mite.



Reg Mattingley from Mange Management administers a dose of drench to a wombat using the pole and scoop method.

The flap is made from an icecream container lid and a bottle top and is suspended from a simple wire frame at the entrance to the burrow. The wombat self-medicates with a readily available pour-on liquid drench when it leaves or returns to its burrow. The solution needs to be checked and replaced weekly, then fortnightly, for 12 treatments. The treatment can be done by trained volunteers on weekends without disturbing the wombat.

A team of Victorian wildlife carers have formed Mange Management – a group working with Landcare groups, Friends groups, wildlife shelters and landowners to help eradicate mange. Mange Management has helped in more than

80 cases and the group is starting to see positive results.

The Mange Management group is keen to inform and educate interested people about this serious animal welfare issue.

Representatives from the Back Creek, Deep Creek, Labertouche, Toomuc Valley, Bunyip, Reedy Creek, Neerim East, St Andrews and Boolara South Landcare Groups as well as the Latrobe Catchment Landcare Network have attended a short management workshop to learn the skills needed to identify and treat mange.

For information about volunteering, workshops and free treatment kits visit the Mange Management website at www.mangemanagement.org.au or call 5942 8518.

TreeProject – planting trees and growing

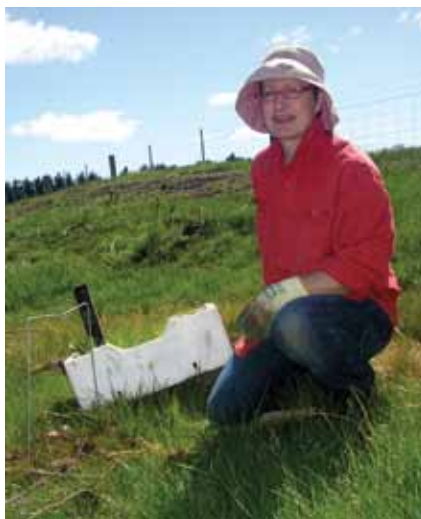
TreeProject is a not-for-profit organisation made up of hundreds of volunteers. For 25 years it has been based on the idea that land management issues, such as soil degradation, waterway health and biodiversity, affect us all.

TreeProject's mission is to revegetate Victoria by growing native seedlings; but revegetation can be expensive and time consuming. TreeProject helps to overcome these difficulties by connecting farmers, Landcare groups and land management agencies with volunteers who can grow seedlings and assist with planting them.

Through the Re-Tree Scheme volunteers from Melbourne and regional Victoria propagate indigenous seedlings at home then TreeProject sells them at a reduced cost. TreeProject has contributed to the large scale revegetation of many degraded ecosystems including biolinks that restore habitat for endangered species and also repairing and improving the productivity of farms. Many volunteer growers establish firm friendships with landholders, supporting them year after year. TreeProject has grown an estimated 2.2 million trees and shrubs over the last 25 years.

Cobaw Biolink benefits from home-grown seedlings

One of TreeProject's largest and longest running projects is assisting with the Cobaw



Penny Roberts from the Newnham Landcare Group planting in the Cobaw Biolink.

Biolink, north of Melbourne. The biolink will create a corridor of native vegetation between Mount Macedon and the Cobaw Ranges that enhances biodiversity and improves water quality in the Deep Creek and Campaspe River catchment areas.

Past land clearing had resulted in loss of habitat for local species, and left areas with remnant vegetation scattered across agricultural land. Creating key corridors along waterways and across high ground will allow for movement and expansion of fauna populations and help to protect endangered species.

TreeProject growers have provided more than 120,000 seedlings to 97 Landcare group members connected to the biolink since 2002.

According to Penny Roberts of the Newnham District Landcare Group it will take several decades to connect all of the remnant areas, but the TreeProject stock expedites the process by making large scale revegetation more likely.

"It is important not only for the obvious extra native plants in the ground, but also for the opportunity it provides to give landowners information on native vegetation in all its complexity and how to maximise the habitat value for wildlife."

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TreeProject has grown an estimated 2.2 million trees and shrubs over the last 25 years.

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Dallas Primary School students planting TreeProject seedlings on Gerard Noonan's farm at Malmsbury.

friendships for 25 years

By De Grebner



Teacher Paul Gleeson (left) and farmer Gerard Noonan have been planting trees together for ten years.

The benefits of the project are already being felt with Melbourne Water reporting improvements in the health of Deep Creek – good news for the southern pygmy perch, flat-headed gudgeon, turtles and platypus.

TreeProject friendships – bringing the city and the bush together

Paul Gleeson, a teacher at Dallas Primary School in Melbourne, has been growing and planting seedlings through TreeProject for more than 10 years. He and his students have developed a close friendship with farmer Gerard Noonan.

Paul remembers the thrill of growing his first TreeProject seedlings.

"It was so exciting to see each tiny seedling pushing up through the earth with promise of becoming a mighty eucalypt. One year, I offered to transport my seedlings to the farm and help plant them – that's how I met Gerard.

"I now grow seedlings with the children at my school and we plant them together. The children have hands-on farm experience and they love it. This is not an answers-on-paper excursion, but a real life, trees-in-the earth experience. Both the teachers and students involved tell me it is the best!"

Gerard Noonan and his wife provide the students with lunch and also give them an opportunity to feed lambs on the farm. The children are from a variety of backgrounds including Iraqi, Vietnamese, Timorese and Lebanese. Many of them have had little contact with the Australian bush.

Gerard, a beef farmer, has always preferred treed landscapes to open plains. He began planting trees in the spring after buying the farm at Malmsbury in 1997.

"Apart from the aesthetics, trees and revegetation on the high rocky outcrops fight salinity recharge. Replanting also provides shelter from cold southerly winds in winter and hot northerlies in summer. To develop the farm, I split paddocks to smaller sizes to allow for rotational and strip grazing and constructed double fences in-filled with plantings so each paddock would have shelter. I was able to use electric fences to simplify construction and reduce costs, but I needed a supply of suitable and affordable seedlings.

"TreeProject makes it much cheaper than buying trees from nurseries and I knew the provenance of the trees because I collect the seed locally. Over the years we've made some great friends while planting trees with the volunteer growers."

Paul has delivered a team of primary school students for 10 years – regardless of weather, season or terrain.

"It's great to see them year after year and they love seeing how 'their' trees are growing."

TreeProject aims to reach out to more landholders each year. For information about how to get involved go to www.treeproject.asn.au/

Tigers roar their support for Landcare

By Phillip McGarry

On the first Saturday in May 2013, Richmond Football Club will take on Geelong Football Club at the MCG in the third Landcare-branded AFL game.

Landcarers from across Victoria are encouraged to attend the game and see the Tigers roar their support for Landcare. Groups can wear their Landcare windcheaters, or the colours of their local football team or AFL team. After the game the Richmond Football Club will announce, and release guidelines for, the second Richmond Football Club Landcare Grant of \$5000.

The grant is a demonstration of the Richmond Football Club's support for Landcare. It will be awarded to a group for an on-ground works project that involves the participation of children and links to local schools. Examples of eligible projects include planting days, weed control and habitat restoration.

The 2012 Richmond Football Club Landcare Grant was awarded to the Tarwin Football Netball Club together with the Tarwin Landcare Group, Tarwin Lower Primary School and South Gippsland Landcare Network for works on the Tarwin Lower Recreation Reserve. A community planting day was held at the reserve in March. More than 40 local school children planted 500 trees and shrubs with help from Richmond Football Club players, club members, parents and relatives.



Richmond Football Club Landcare Ambassador and 2013 captain Trent Cotchin at the commemorative tree planting at the Punt Road Oval last year.

Nurcoun restoration links the landscape

One of the largest biodiverse plantings done in a single year in Victoria has been successfully established at Nurcoun in the west Wimmera. The Nurcoun Link is one of several showcase biologically diverse carbon restoration sites involving Greening Australia.

The project is part of an immense landscape plan to reconnect remnant vegetation from the coast to the outback straddling the South Australian and Victorian border, called Habitat 141.

The partners that make up Habitat 141 – Greening Australia, Parks Victoria, Trust for Nature, the Victorian Mallee Fowl Recovery Group and the Grampians to Little Desert Biolink – identified the 180-hectare property as a way to connect the Nurcoun Flora and Fauna Reserve with the Little Desert National Park.

The property consisted of retired cropping and grazing land and remnant vegetation. It was targeted to reconnect important habitat for the nationally vulnerable Mallee fowl and forked spyridium as well as many other flora and fauna species.

Greening Australia bought the property in 2008 and planning soon started to restore it for multiple outcomes. Greening Australia's experience is that vegetation systems are more resilient when they are made up of local species evolving



Jess Gardner from Greening Australia and Andrew Mathers from Conservation Volunteers Australia at the top of Mt Arapiles surveying the landscape surrounding the Nurcoun Link.

and adapting to suit local environmental conditions. Large-scale restoration sites are also important seed resources for the future so rare and threatened species must be included. Getting the right seed and plants in the right place has been an important part of planning the restoration at Nurcoun.

Soil surveys guide restoration works

During the first year of the project comprehensive soil surveys identified three main Ecological Vegetation Classes which guided the restoration and informed decisions on appropriate site preparation and seed collection.

Sites with clay soils less than half a metre down were ripped using a tractor with tree ripper to alleviate compaction. The rest of the property was strip sprayed multiple times to control weeds and conserve water without exposing areas vulnerable to erosion.

A combination of direct seeding and planting of nursery-raised seedlings was done in mid-2009. Greening Australia staff direct seeded 110 hectares over a two-week period. The Arborline Nursery in Hamilton then employed teams of local people to plant the 60,000 seedlings they had grown for the project. The planting took three weeks. A 20-hectare section of the property supporting native groundcover species was only lightly planted and had minimal soil disturbance.

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Rabbit control assistance from surrounding landholders has been crucial to the success of the restoration works.

”



Jess Gardner and local Conservation Volunteers Australia workers are helping to clean up old fences on the property.

and sinks carbon

By Jess Gardner



Nurcoungh neighbours enjoy a barbecue organised by Greening Australia where rabbit control across the district was discussed.

Monitoring underway

With the support of the RE Ross Trust, Simply Energy and Cool Australia, the majority of the restoration plantings at Nurcoungh have been established as voluntary carbon sinks, to offset greenhouse gas emissions. Greening Australia plans to register the property with the Australian Government Carbon Farming Initiative.

How the local indigenous species perform as vehicles to sink carbon and how we can ensure the long-term resilience of the restoration effort if it is to function as a permanent carbon sink are critical questions for the project.

Greening Australia has committed to monitoring 43 permanent plots across the property each autumn and spring. The objective of the monitoring is to answer many of the questions still unknown to restoration practitioners. For example, determining appropriate direct seeding rates, recording survival statistics and deciding whether certain species should be planted or direct seeded. Importantly, we are able to provide local data for these species to demonstrate their carbon yield.

In collaboration with Singarayer Florentine from the University of Ballarat, a paper detailing the findings will be published later this year.

Rabbit control assistance from surrounding landholders has been crucial to the success of the restoration works. Greening Australia has directed funds to help reinvigorate the Arapiles Landcare Group rabbit baiting program. Greening Australia puts a high priority on being a good neighbour by controlling pest plants and animals and reducing the fire risk at Nurcoungh. Adjacent landholders have

been contracted to assist with maintaining access tracks across the property and building a wider fire break on the western edge. Employing local people, sourcing materials in the area and engaging with the community have raised the profile of the project and created a positive sense of community ownership.

The Nurcoungh Link has been established without direct government funding – although it has greatly benefited from many government supported initiatives including the Landcare movement. Nurcoungh is an impressive example of how a large scale restoration project can be planned and carried out using best practice techniques. With the monitoring program now yielding results, the project will contribute to what we come to understand as best practice into the future. Nurcoungh provides a living lesson for learning and improvement.

Jess Gardner is the Habitat 141 Wimmera Project Officer at Greening Australia.

For further information email Jess at jgardner@gavic.org.au



Revegetation works at Nurcoungh will help to reconnect important habitat for the nationally vulnerable Mallee fowl.

FTLA update

By Susi Johnson

Secrets of successful groups

Ten Secrets of Successful Groups training sessions were held across Victoria in 2012. Co-funded by DSE and the Farm Tree and Landcare Association (FTLA), the sessions covered effective decision-making, governance, legal duties and volunteer recruitment. The sessions saw more than 180 participants contributing approximately 1000 hours to improving the effectiveness of Landcare.

Participants identified a wide range of things they do well – from engaging large corporations to collecting ecological data, to making Landcare fun. Succession and recruitment topped almost every list of things that needed to be improved.

Kim Boswell from Landcare for Singles shared her recruitment expertise and Stephanie Tonkin from the Public Interest Legal Clearing House provided a common sense legal perspective.

Feedback from the sessions has been positive, with many participants surprised by which topics were most useful to them. Participants went home with a practical list of things to do including more recruitment, celebrating successes, strategic planning and improving meetings.

Associations Incorporation Reform Act

The new *Associations Incorporation Reform Act (2012)* and its regulations came into effect on 26 November 2012. As a result all incorporated associations, including the FTLA and some of our member groups, will need to make minor changes to our rules during the year. The Public Interest Legal Clearing House has developed practical resources to help groups make the transition. Go to www.pilch.org.au/newlawsincassoc/

Current FTLA member groups received an information sheet on the implications of the changes in the February mail-out.

For further information call the FTLA on 9207 5527 or email ftla@vff.org.au

A collective approach to blackberry control after bushfire

By Rob Fallon

On 7 February 2009 the Black Saturday bushfires swept through the northern Yarra region causing devastating loss of life and injury to people and damage to dwellings and properties. Over 50,000 hectares of the Yarra Ranges were burnt, with a significant impact on threatened species and hundreds of other flora and fauna species.

Blackberry was one of the first species to appear following the bushfires. With its vast underground root system and hard coated seeds, it was able to withstand the fires and quickly re-establish itself in burnt areas. Blackberries reduce pasture production, restrict access to water and land and provide food and shelter for pest animals such as rabbits and foxes.

The regrowth of native vegetation has also been prolific in the fire-affected area, which would usually lead to complex ecosystems being re-established. However, the unchecked spread of blackberry has compromised the natural regeneration taking place. It was feared this could lead to reduced biodiversity on private land, neighbouring public land and waterways. Landowners identified blackberry as one of the most difficult challenges in restoring their land after bushfires.



Ann Taylor contemplates how to approach this serious infestation at Dixons Creek.

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Blackberry was one of the first species to appear following the bushfires.

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Systematic approach needed

The *Victorian Catchment and Land Protection Act (1994)* states that landowners must take all reasonable steps to prevent the growth and spread of regionally controlled weeds like blackberry, but according to the president of the Northern Yarra Landcare Network, Michael Nardella, this is a very difficult task for a fire-affected community.

“We’re dealing with a complex situation that needs a systematic approach, especially when people have limited energy and so many competing priorities. The situation is very tough for many landowners.”

The Northern Yarra Landcare Network, itself only a few months old, embarked upon a program to assist its fire-affected

community in the control of blackberry. Landcare members from across the region met with the Victorian Blackberry Taskforce, securing funding for bushfire recovery from the Victorian Bushfire Appeal Fund and forming the Northern Yarra Blackberry Action Group (NYBAG) in October 2011.

Within a month of forming, NYBAG had arranged for a Blackberry Project Officer to start talking to landowners about blackberry control. Beyond the townships of Yarra Glen and Healesville, properties range in size from lifestyle blocks through to small and mid-size farms.

NYBAG uses the Victorian Blackberry Taskforce model of empowering a community for the long term without taking away its responsibilities.



Members of the Northern Yarra Blackberry Action Group inspect a blackberry site that spans both public and private land on the Melba Highway at Dixons Creek.

Collective action for long-term results

Michael Nardella says the group didn't know what to expect.

"More than 40 landowners joined NYBAG in the first year and we are aiming for at least 90 this year. We had to make sure landowners knew we weren't offering more handouts. That's a short-term solution. We encourage collective action between landowners so that blackberry is tackled jointly. There's nothing worse than controlling blackberry on your property one year, only to see it reinfested from a neighbouring property the next year."

NYBAG is a community-led group, but other agencies including Yarra Ranges Council, DSE, DPI, Melbourne Water, Parks Victoria, VicRoads and the Port Philip and Westernport CMA are also involved.

NYBAG treasurer John Birse has been impressed with the support from all of the agencies.

"There's a terrific spirit of co-operation whenever we meet. The agencies are helping us to achieve our goals and they get a real buzz out of that. They can see the huge amount of work we are generating on private land and are able to complement that work with their own effort on public land."

Now in its second year, NYBAG offers co-ordination and mapping services, as well as a small incentive to assist landowners with their work. The Landcare

network is also able to provide discounts on herbicide and safety wear, plus free farm chemicals training and equipment hire. Non-chemical options for blackberry control are a new feature of the program this year.

A variety of control options

According to Project Officer Carolyn Suggate one of the new options is working with volunteers from Conservation Volunteers Australia.

"The volunteers have been visiting properties to tackle blackberry by hand in places where chemical treatment is not an option. Being able to offer a variety of different solutions is really important for a diverse range of landowners."

NYBAG has gone on to secure additional funding from the Australian Government Biodiversity Fund which will be used to support blackberry control in the areas of highest regenerating biodiversity.

Michael Nardella is keen to see the program expanded to include other pest species.

"Who knows – we could even use the Victorian Blackberry Taskforce community model to control rabbits – now that would be amazing!"

Rob Fallon is the Northern Yarra Landcare Facilitator. For further information about NYBAG contact Michael Nardella by email at nybag@northernyarralandcare.net.au



Conservation volunteers take a break after clearing blackberry by hand on a property at Dixons Creek.

Around the State – News from the

Wimmera

Jody Taberner has joined the team as a Partnerships Project Officer with Conservation Volunteers Australia. Jody will be strengthening support for Wimmera Landcare volunteers and their on-ground works. She is based at the CMA office in Horsham.

This year is shaping as a highly productive one for local Landcare groups. Landcare had a strong presence at the recent Wimmera Machinery Field Days with local Landcare facilitators working alongside Regional Landcare Facilitators.

Upcoming events include the 15th anniversary of the Yarrilinks community planting weekend. A Landcare celebration is planned for Warracknabeal on 3–4 August 2013 and everyone is welcome to celebrate this unique event.

Congratulations to West Wimmera Landcare Facilitator Rachel Farran on the birth of her second child.

For further information contact
Joel Boyd on 5382 1544.

East Gippsland

The East Gippsland Landcare community will hold its Regional Landcare Award celebrations in May. The awards will recognise the inspiring work on sustainable agriculture, riparian restoration and improving biodiversity in the region. The awards will also highlight the achievements made in improving our popular public assets including the East Gippsland Rail Trail and the shores of the Gippsland Lakes.

The East Gippsland Agricultural Field Days will take place on 19–20 April 2013 in Baimsdale and will be a great opportunity for the Landcare community to share and promote their projects. More than 700 visitors are expected through the Landcare tent.

Upcoming events include a whole farm planning workshop for horse owners, a course on low stress stock handling, a soil forum to be held at Bruthen and a field day on healthy soils for dairy farmers at Orbost.

For further information contact Amanda Bartkowski on 5150 3851.

Corangamite

The region's Landcare co-ordinators got together for a successful farm water planning workshop with support from DPI at the Cape Otway Ecology Centre late last year.

The Stony Rises Land Management Network and WestVic Dairy are working together to establish a focus farm group with several successful events now held on the extension of sustainable agricultural practices.

The Surf Coast and Inland Plains Landcare Network has been working on a holistic grazing management project, with enthusiastic locals keen to be involved. This is an extension of the Soils First program.

The Corangamite Landcare Support Plan is being developed. Feedback from groups and networks across the region is welcomed. Go to www.corangamite.landcarevic.net.au/

The Corangamite Landcare Awards and celebration will be held in May. After 16 years with the Geelong Landcare community we sadly farewell our colleague and friend Bronte Payne. All the best for the future, Bronte!

For further information contact
Tracey McRae on 5232 9100.

North Central

Regional Landcare Facilitator Ashley Beven hosted a successful 2013 Future Farming Expo at Yarrawalla in March. Farmers and the general public turned up in droves to listen to expert presenters including Jane Bunn on weather and Darren Doherty who discussed regenerative agriculture. There were also presentations on carbon farming, beneficial insects, social media and in-paddock demonstrations.

The Regional Landcare Co-ordinator and Regional Waterwatch Co-ordinator teamed up in March to host the 2013 Annual Water Science Forum: Focus on Fish at Cohuna. The many attendees heard from fish ecology experts on topics including fish behaviour and life cycles, identification of native fish species and the threats to native fish and healthy habitats.

To learn more about these events go to www.nccma.vic.gov.au

For further information contact
Jodie Odgers on 5440 1883.

Goulburn Broken

The Violet Town, Boho, Glenaroua, Kyabram and Shepparton communities have all experienced recent fires where local landowners have been affected. The Upper Goulburn Landcare Network is assisting several of these communities in the recovery effort with both equipment and knowledge. The network played a big part in the environmental recovery from Black Saturday. Thanks to Mark Jesser for his photograph of the Boho fire on page 23.

Rail trails are receiving interest and support from communities in Mansfield, Yea and Murchison developing new trails or extending current trails.

Landcare staff training has been a priority with first aid, mapping and Gateway training all being delivered in the past few months.



The Goongerah Landcare Group has completed works at the Goongerah picnic ground north of Orbost. The group has removed a blackberry infestation and chipped thistles at the picturesque site on the Brodribb River.

Regional Landcare Co-ordinators



A CFA volunteer and a landholder take stock after the bushfire at Boho on 27 January 2013.

New partnerships are being developed by Landcare and the Men's Shed movement in the region. Indian myna bird numbers are growing and are impacting on the smaller local native birds. There is a groundswell of community support to get a control project up and running.

For further information contact
Tony Kubiel on 5761 1619.

Port Phillip and Westernport

Support for Landcare in the region is again strong. The last of the new part-time Local Landcare Facilitators are now on board with Anne Fitzpatrick appointed by the Yarra Valley and Dandenong Ranges Network and John Bradford by the Upper Deep Creek Landcare Network.

There are also a couple of new faces at the CMA. Rosemary Reilly has taken on the role of Natural Resource Management Co-ordinator for the Mornington Peninsula and Anthony Duffy is filling the position for the Yarra, while Emmanuelle Brunet is discovering the joys of being a first-time mum.

All the local co-ordinators and facilitators across the region have taken part in a training workshop to further develop their peer learning skills with a focus on engaging communities.

The CMA's draft Landcare Support Plan will be finalised by June 2013.

For further information contact
Doug Evans on 8781 7920.

Glenelg Hopkins

There was a fantastic response to the CMA's farm gate signs promotion with 500 signs allocated within the first fortnight and a waiting list for a new batch.

A photographic competition showing members attaching the signs to their gates is now being conducted. Go to www.glenelghopkins.landcarevic.net.au/

The Regional Landcare Support Strategy 2012–2018 has been ratified by the CMA board. The purpose of the document is to guide Landcare support in the region. The document is the result of extensive public consultation and aims to reflect the direction sought from the local Landcare community. The strategy can be viewed at www.ghcma.vic.gov.au/

The eight Landcare facilitators employed under the Victorian Local Landcare Facilitator Initiative have settled into their roles and are providing much needed support for their groups and networks. They are an excellent source of information and assistance for activities in their respective areas.

For further information contact
Tony Lithgow on 5571 2526.

West Gippsland

Landcare in the region continues to be dynamic, inventive and practical but most importantly, linked to local communities.

Landcare network boards participated in a governance training for not-for-profits course delivered by the Public Interest Legal Clearing House at Leongatha in March.

The training involved the board members and staff from the five networks in the region along with members of the Westernport Landcare Network. It was an excellent opportunity for the 40 community Landcare leaders who attended.

For further information contact
Phillip McGarry on 1300 094 262.

North East

The CMA has been hosting small local consultation meetings with Landcare groups and networks across the region. The meetings will help provide information during the development of the new Regional Landcare Support Plan.

Planning is well underway for the Regional Landcare Forum to be held in June. The forum will feature a series of workshops and presentations on innovation and successful group projects.

The bikeTREES project hosted by the Ovens Landcare Network is now in its second year. This project is a partnership between Landcare Victoria, the network and bikeTREES, a bike-industry-funded revegetation program.

The recently formed Wodonga Urban Landcare Network has launched their new Biolinks II project – a plan for urban waterways and reserves involving a range of community groups.

For further information contact
Tom Croft on (02) 6043 7648.

Mallee

Landcare groups across the Mallee started the year with a flurry of activity. Pest plant and animal control has been a priority. With reduced feed and dry soil it has been an ideal time to implement baiting and ripping programs that will help reduce rabbit numbers later in the year.

Fox numbers are also on the increase in the region with many farmers reporting a significant amount of fox activity. Fox control will also be a high priority as foxes have a major impact on the Mallee's fauna and the agricultural production of fat lambs.

For further information contact
Kevin Chaplin on 5051 4344.

In brief

Australia's first Landcare number plates ready to drive away

Victorians can now show their support for Landcare by choosing a special Landcare number plate for their vehicle. Minister for Environment and Climate Change Ryan Smith launched the nation's first Landcare number plates at Waratah Bay in South Gippsland in December 2012.

"Driving around with Landcare number plates is a great way for people to fly the flag for this iconic grassroots movement," Minister Smith said.

Victoria is the first state to have special interest number plates dedicated to Landcare thanks to the efforts of the South Gippsland Landcare Network (SGLN). The number plates have a distinctive Landcare look with green lettering and Landcare's iconic hands.

Each Landcare number plate has the slogan 'Supporting Landcare' and motorists can choose a number between 001-LC and 100-LC, depending on availability.

The funds raised from the Landcare number plates will assist the SGLN to continue their work for the environment and community in protecting remnant vegetation, creating koala habitat and rehabilitating land slips.



SGLN Network Co-ordinator Belinda Brennan and Fosky the koala check a demonstration model Landcare number plate on Belinda's car.

For more information or to purchase a number plate contact Belinda Brennan on 0409 004 901 or by email at sgln@landcare.net

Next issue – sustainable farming

The next issue of the magazine will feature stories on sustainable farming. Contributions to the next issue should be sent to the editor by 7 June 2013.

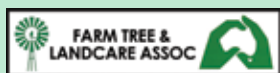
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Read the magazine online

Back issues of the Victorian Landcare & Catchment Management magazine can be found at www.dse.vic.gov.au/victorianlandcaremagazine

The print size of the magazine can be enlarged online for easier reading.