

VICTORIAN

LANDCARE

Autumn 2012 Issue 54

& CATCHMENT MANAGEMENT



INVASIVE PLANTS AND ANIMALS FEATURE

Banishing bridal creeper

Fox baiting for biodiversity

Weed control on the urban fringe

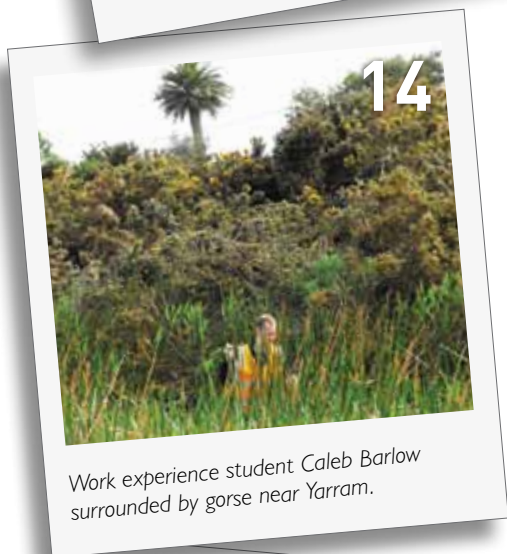


Victorian Landcare and Catchment Management

AUTUMN 2012 ISSUE 54



Hawkweed (*Hieracium* genus).



Work experience student Caleb Barlow surrounded by gorse near Yarram.



A red fox in the box ironbark forests of the Goulburn Broken catchment.

Contents

03 From the Minister

04 Banishing bridal creeper

The story of how a shire and a Landcare group are working with local students to eradicate bridal creeper from the Echuca area.

07 Sallow wattle targeted

The Laharum Landcare Group has joined forces with Conservation Volunteers Australia to tackle sallow wattle north west of the Grampians.

08 Is your pretty garden plant a noxious weed?

Find out how to identify some of the state's very worst weeds.

12 Tackling serrated tussock in the north east

A review of a long-term project to control serrated tussock within the Indigo Shire has some good lessons for designing effective weed control projects.

18 Fox baiting program a win-win for productivity and the environment

Two conservation management networks in the Goulburn Broken catchment have been successful at using a whole of landscape approach to fox control.

20 Collaborative weed control on the urban fringe

The Urban Fringe Weed Management Initiative is attempting to achieve better weed control by building effective partnerships between government agencies, local councils and the community.

22 Around the State

News from the Regional Landcare Co-ordinators.

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Cover photograph

A fox near a cape weed covered rabbit warren
on a hillside at Gooram, by Joshua Smith.

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From the Minister

Another exciting issue of the magazine, with something for everyone – I'm particularly interested in the inspirational stories on the groups and networks tackling invasive plants and animals. The way we manage this issue is really important and I hope you get as much out of the articles as I have.

We often see the most successful results from projects like this, involving partnerships between landholders, community groups and public land managers.

It's these strong, effective partnerships that deliver real on-ground results for

our environment. The Victorian Coalition Government values Landcare for its strong community linkages and positive relationships with government and business.

Contributing to Landcare's success are the facilitators who play an important role in helping secure funding for projects and providing support to Landcare groups on project development, management, communication and administration.

In December 2011, I had the pleasure of announcing the 60 organisations that were

successful in the Victorian Local Landcare Facilitators Initiative. This initiative provides funding for an additional 60 Landcare facilitators across Victoria. It's terrific to see that these positions are currently being filled and that they will provide additional support for the great work that Landcare does every day.

During a visit to the North East CMA region in February, I had the chance to meet with the Friends of Willow Park. It was great to be out and about getting to know the people delivering such great results for the environment.

The trip also included a visit to some local wetlands and catch ups with those working on local projects such as Waterwatch and with the Rutherglen Landcare Group. I share their view on how important community partnerships are and look forward to working closely with them, and you, in the future.

Congratulations are due to the four Victorian Landcarers who received medals of the Order of Australia in the 2012 Australia Day honours list.

Lindsay Smith of Horsham was recognised for his service to conservation, the environment and the community in the Wimmera, while Barry Clugston of Stawell received his medal for service to regional Victoria through water industry and environmental organisations.

Rob Youl has been involved in Landcare since the early 1980s and is the chair of Australian Landcare International. Sue Marriott was recognised for her service to conservation and the environment through the Secretariat for International Landcare.

The dedication and commitment they have shown to Landcare is inspiring and we have all benefited from their efforts.

Ryan Smith
Minister for Environment and
Climate Change



From left, Julie Hind from the Friends of Willow Park, Emma Nilsson from the North East CMA and Victorian Environment Minister Ryan Smith testing water quality at Willow Park, Wodonga.

Banishing bridal creeper – VCAL students lead the way

By Rhonda Day

Tackling a weed as serious as bridal creeper – one of Australia's 20 Weeds of National Significance – requires dedication and lateral thinking. This is the story of how a shire and a Landcare group worked with local students on a project to eradicate bridal creeper from the Echuca area.

Bridal creeper is regarded as one of the worst weeds in Australia because of its invasiveness, potential for spread and economic and environmental impacts. Originally entering the country as a garden plant, it can grow on a wide range of soils, preferring sandy, well-drained soils with good moisture. The plant dies back over summer – but don't let it fool you, it will return from its vigorous root system, which accounts for over 85 per cent of the plant's bulk.

Bridal creeper is a perennial climber or scrambler, growing up to three metres high, with long, wiry stems. It has glossy green leaves and thick mat of underground fleshy tubers – these impede root growth of other plants and prevent native seedlings from establishing.

In 2007 the Echuca Landcare Group and the Shire of Campaspe identified major infestations along the Campaspe River within the Echuca township. Biological control was seen as the best way forward, taking into account the individual patches of bridal creeper and extensive costs involved with other methods of control (chemical and mechanical).

In 2007 the Echuca East Primary School participated in a State Government Weed Warriors program, breeding leafhoppers and releasing them beside the Campaspe River. The leafhopper (*Zygina* sp.) was the first natural enemy of bridal creeper to be released in Australia. They have proven to be effective locally, but results have been sporadic. Although the children thoroughly enjoyed working on the project, there are now minimal signs of hopper impact in the release area.

Hoppers, beetles and fungus...

Later in 2007 DPI Frankston, in conjunction with the Shire of Campaspe and the Echuca Landcare Group, made rust fungus spore water to spray on infestations. Rust fungus (*Puccinia myrsiphylli*) was approved



Echuca Landcare Group and VCAL students worked together to make rust fungus spore water and sprayed it on bridal creeper infestations last year.

for release in Australia in 2000. It is host specific, will not attack any economically important or native plant species and is the second natural enemy of bridal creeper to be released in Australia. Rust fungus affects the vigour of bridal creeper plants, reducing growth and seed production.

In 2008 the bridal creeper leaf beetle was also released but was soon ruled out as a future control method as it has only persisted at one site across Australia.

In early 2010 five students in the St Joseph's College Victorian Certificate of Applied Learning (VCAL) program engaged



Rust fungus at work on a bridal creeper infestation.

in a bridal creeper mapping project. After an in-class presentation and field visit to give them some background the students mapped infestations along the western side of the Campaspe River through Echuca. The students noted any impacts on native vegetation, fauna, other weeds and visible signs of previous biological control. They found infestations of bridal creeper had increased significantly over four years, but that in the areas where rust fungus had been sprayed in 2007, it was having an effect on infestations.

The student group presented its findings to shire representatives, the Echuca Landcare Group, school teachers, family and friends. The VCAL mapping project helped to determine the extent of infestations and guide future direction for control and applications for funding.

A Caring for our Country bid was successful and the Banishing Bridal Creeper Project – co-ordinated by the Shire of Campaspe and the Echuca Landcare Group – got underway.

The aims of the project were to trial various methods of control to determine the best for the area – physical removal, biological (using rust fungus), chemical or fire. The target was to remove and/or control 50 per cent of bridal creeper in the project area by June 2012.

Student research underway

Very little research had been undertaken into methods of control in inland Victoria. The project area was split into four areas with control methods trialed in each.

In March 2011 the VCAL student group marked out quadrants, recorded information and took photographs. In April National Bridal Creeper Co-ordinator Shauna Potter and DPI bio-control expert Greg Lefoe presented a community session on the methods of biological control.

In June the students physically removed bridal creeper plants, ensuring all tubers were taken from underground and the plants were bagged for disposal. Within each quadrant, indigenous grasses and groundcover species were planted. Over coming months the quadrants were monitored and by the end of the year, no bridal creeper plants had grown back.

The VCAL students purchased equipment for making rust fungus spore water and infected plants for making spore water were sourced near Murrabit. A community spore water making session was held in August with VCAL students, Echuca Landcare Group, Campaspe Shire and Parks Victoria staff and members of the public attending and learning how to spray spore water on bridal creeper infestations. Results in the months following were pleasing, with plants showing clear evidence of rust fungus.

A local contractor was engaged in the spring to spray large sections of the project area. There was strong evidence in the months following to suggest this had a detrimental effect on the bridal creeper. A hot burn is planned for autumn 2012 to see what effects this has on the plants.

The 2012 VCAL group will continue with the project, assisting with revegetation and community awareness. The students have been invaluable to the project and illustrated a real commitment to the local environment.

The 2012 VCAL group will continue with the project, assisting with revegetation and community awareness. The students have been invaluable to the project and illustrated a real commitment to the local environment. The Shire of Campaspe and St Joseph's College Echuca were awarded the 2010 VCAL State Partnership Award for excellence in the category of VCAL partnerships.

The Echuca Landcare Group is also keen to continue the project. They aim to involve Echuca Secondary College students in 2012 and work to raise awareness of this terrible weed for future years, with the aim of eradicating it from the area forever.

For further information contact Rhonda Day on 5481 2804 or visit www.weeds.gov.au



An infestation of bridal creeper growing up a eucalypt in the Echuca area.

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Careful management is needed where erosion and weed infestations can occur after soil disturbance.

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Rabbit Buster co-ordinator Simone Ulstrup discusses harbour destruction works with excavator operators Shorty Terrip (left) and Michael Kopanica.

Long-term rabbit busting in the Strathbogie Ranges

By Janet Hagen

The Hughes Creek Catchment Collaborative Landcare Network has been co-ordinating the Rabbit Buster Program in the granite country of the southern Strathbogie Ranges for 18 years. Over this time the area has changed from rabbit and bracken infested marginal farmland to prime real estate with high biodiversity values.

The Landcare network has played a large part in reducing the number of rabbits in the landscape through the delivery of the Rabbit Buster Program. The program has involved employing a dedicated co-ordinator and control measures such as 1080 carrot campaigns, warren ripping, harbour removal, co-ordinated shooting days and education.

Harbour removal and warren destruction have been successful in reducing rabbits from the plague numbers of over 128 per kilometre transect in 1994 to manageable numbers of less than 4 per kilometre transect in 2011. The total investment to date on rabbit control by landholders

and government in the Hughes Creek catchment has been over \$1.6 million.

In the early days farmers ripped warrens with their own tractors. Today heavy duty excavators with specialised tynes are hired to deep-rip warrens. Bracken removal with herbicide is no longer used as remnant bracken is considered to be wildlife habitat rather than rabbit harbour, but blackberry bushes are still controlled each year.

The need to balance harbour destruction with the protection of native species habitat, especially on fragile rocky outcrops, is an issue. Careful management is needed where erosion and weed infestations can occur after soil disturbance. More is being learnt each year on how to control rabbits in high value biodiversity areas; for example making sure native grasses are supplied to be sown over the ripped area.

President of the Landcare network and excavator contractor Michael Kopanica feels strongly about rabbit control.

“An integrated control program is essential, follow up shooting, poisoning and fumigation are all tools that are used in a co-ordinated way to support the initial warren destruction.”

Greg Wood from DPI has supported the Rabbit Buster Program by introducing hard hitting compliance projects targeting 100 properties in rabbit hot spots each year. This strategy has been very effective in convincing non co-operative property owners to join the program.

According to the current Rabbit Buster co-ordinator, Simone Ulstrup, the challenge for coming years will be eradicating the rabbits that are surviving along roadsides, in heaps of fallen timber or under buildings.

“We need to control these rabbits before they re-populate the landscape. New techniques are needed as we can't use heavy machinery in these areas,” Simone said.

**For further information contact
Tony Kubeil at the Goulburn Broken
CMA on 5761 1619.**



A Conservation Volunteers Australia group from Woodcroft College in South Australia removing sallow wattle on a property at Laharum.

Laharum Landcare Group tackles sallow wattle

By Joel Boyd

The Laharum Landcare Group has joined forces with Conservation Volunteers Australia (CVA) to target sallow wattle on more than 6000 hectares of privately owned bushland north west of the Grampians National Park in the Wimmera. The sallow wattle project is supported by the Wimmera CMA and the wider Wimmera Landcare community.

Sallow wattle is an invader of heathlands, woodlands and riparian habitats. It tolerates a wide range of soil types, exposed positions and seasonal dry spells. The ability of sallow wattle to fix nitrogen has allowed it to invade nutrient-poor environments such as the northern Grampians.

Sallow wattle produces huge numbers of seeds annually, particularly with disturbance, and the hard-coated seeds can remain viable for decades. The nutrient enrichment caused by sallow wattle is altering the heathlands of the Grampians and causing secondary weed invasion by introduced grasses.

According to Laharum Landcare Group president Bruce McInnes sallow wattle has become a major problem in burnt areas of the Grampians, spreading along waterways with last year's major floods.

"Physical removal of the plant takes a lot of time and energy and the good work and support of Gail Weston and her team at CVA has been tremendous," Bruce said.

The Laharum Landcare Group area south of Horsham is a cropping and grazing area, with cut-flower plantations, vineyards and olive groves. Some landholders have placed covenants on their land and the area has high native riparian vegetation and waterway values. The area is an important link between the upper Wimmera catchment, the Grampians, the Wimmera Heritage River corridor and the threatened ecological vegetation communities of the south-west Wimmera.

"Through our experience on private covenanted land we are developing a

Sallow wattle produces huge numbers of seeds annually, particularly with disturbance, and the hard-coated seeds can remain viable for decades.



The McInnes property at Wartook.

control program for sallow wattle which we will extend to all uncropped land abutting the Grampians National Park in the Laharum Landcare Group area," Bruce said.

According to CVA project officer Gail Weston the CVA aims to meet the needs of a range of groups by engaging them in activities that have positive outcomes for the natural environment, the local community, families and individuals.

"Laharum's sallow wattle project is a really good example of that," Gail said.

For further information contact Joel Boyd at the Wimmera CMA on 5382 1544.

Is your pretty garden plant a

Just like a strawberry sending out a runner, plants are designed to move into new areas and take over ground to ensure their ongoing survival. Unfortunately, many of the attributes that have made plants attractive for gardeners to buy – drought tolerance, hardiness and rapid growth – are also often the same attributes of the very worst weeds in Victoria.

In 2003 a number of garden plants were declared as state prohibited weeds under the Catchment and Land Protection Act 1994. These plants are prohibited from sale because they pose a significant risk to our waterways, food production, parks and social values.

The following state prohibited weeds have been in trade prior to 2003 and may still be found in gardens today.



Knotweed

Knotweed (*Fallopia japonica*, *Fallopia sachalinensis*, *Fallopia x bohemica*)

Knotweeds are fast growing, semi-woody perennials that can form dense leafy thickets and smother understorey species. Knotweeds flower in summer with most of the foliage dying back over winter. The long-lived rhizomes grow to six metres in depth and spread 20 metres laterally. Knotweeds can also grow from small fragments or cuttings.

In Scotland, mortgages have been denied for properties containing knotweed infestations as the plant can damage building structures. There has been no recorded damage to houses in Victoria at this stage.

In 2011 a keen eyed DPI officer noticed a knotweed plant growing on a roadside at Beech Forest in the Otway Ranges. The single plant, extending three metres high and seven metres wide, straddled a roadside culvert. A survey of the area indicated no other infestations. The plant was treated by DPI and the site will be continually monitored for any re-emergence.

Mexican feather grass (*Nassella tenuissima*)

Mexican feather grass is a hardy drought-tolerant tussock that is unpalatable to stock. In 2008, Mexican feather grass was inadvertently sold by a number of retail stores in Victoria. DPI was able to recover around 80 per cent of the seed and plants that were sold; however, there are still potentially 800 properties that have Mexican feather grass.

Discoveries in the last two years have shown that gardens where Mexican feather grass has seeded have a lot of new plants emerging and in some cases lawns have been covered with this invasive plant.



Mexican feather grass

Hawkweed (*Hieracium* genus)

Hawkweeds are a highly invasive species that can tolerate a wide range of temperatures and growing conditions including full sun, part shade, frost or snow. Three species of hawkweed (king devil, orange and mouse-ear hawkweed) have naturalised to a limited extent in Victoria's alpine regions at Falls Creek and Mt Buller.

noxious weed?

By Sarah Partington

Hawkweeds have harmed biodiversity values in the alpine areas of New Zealand's South Island, and have the potential for similar damage to Victoria's highlands.

A Victorian alpine group has formed to co-ordinate hawkweed eradication at Falls Creek and Mt Buller. This group includes representatives from DPI, Parks Victoria, the resort management boards and ski lift companies. Weekly surveillance, monitoring and treatment are undertaken from November to March each year to coincide with the key flowering period.

Good progress is being made by the group and a decrease in the total number of infestation sites has been recorded.

In the lower altitude areas of Victoria, hawkweeds have been found in Ballarat, Bacchus Marsh, Melbourne, Foster and Trentham.

Horsetail (*entire Equisetum* genus)

Horsetails have the potential to become a persistent weed in wetlands and other low-lying areas in southern Australia. All species are thought to contain chemicals that are toxic to livestock.



Hawkweed



Horsetail

Horsetails have extensive underground root systems that allow them to travel up to two metres in depth and 100 metres laterally. Horsetails have been known to grow through bitumen and concrete.

Horsetails, sometimes mistaken as bamboo, were very popular in the 1990s as a garden plant.

Other declared state prohibited weeds that could be in your garden include alligator weed (*Alternanthera philoxeroides*), water hyacinth (*Eichhornia crassipes*) and salvinia (*Salvinia molesta*). For a full list and pictures of state prohibited weeds in Victoria go to www.dpi.vic.gov.au/weeds

If you suspect you have seen any of these state prohibited weeds contact DPI immediately on 136 186 with details of where the plant is located. DPI will arrange for the safe treatment and removal of the plant at no cost to the landholder.

Building nest boxes attracts new volunteers to Landcare

By Sue Wansbrough

Distress at the number of trees destroyed by the 2009 fires motivated the Monbulk Landcare Group to undertake a nest box building project in their local community.

The project was funded by a Landcare Volunteer Recruitment Initiative grant and as well as providing homes for native animals it has attracted new volunteers to Landcare.

Initially the project started by building 100 nest boxes with Bayswater Bunnings and Bayswater Secondary College, with the nest boxes being built in the Bayswater Bunnings store. This program is now into its second year and has expanded further with the Ringwood branch of the Salvation Army and Billanook College in Mooroolbark also offering their assistance and contributing to a further 43 nest boxes.



Students from Bayswater Secondary College built nest boxes at Bayswater Bunnings for the Monbulk Landcare Group.

In a six-month period we were able to build, install and monitor 143 nest boxes. We focused heavily on providing larger boxes suitable for greater and yellow bellied gliders as there is concern that these species are disappearing. We have also provided boxes for crimson rosellas, brushtail possums, feathertail gliders, kookaburras and sugar gliders.

The boxes were mainly installed on public land, but some were placed on private land adjacent to wildlife corridors. Alex Maisey from the Friends of Sassafras Creek Lyrebird Survey Group has mapped the boxes and has taken on the enormous task of monitoring them into the future. Alex's assistance, along with Vicki Boyle from the Southern Dandenongs Landcare Group, has been invaluable to the project.

The project has had a strong community education component. The environmental volunteers' stand at the Kallista Market was used to showcase the importance of nest boxes and provide information to people wanting to learn how to build them.

An excursion, courtesy of Rob Fallon from the Shire of Yarra Ranges, took a Salvation Army group into a bushfire area and provided insights for them into the plight of our native fauna.

A talk given to students at Belgrave Heights Christian School encouraged them to get involved. The school has now built 20 boxes along the creek line adjacent to their school. The school has also approached the local council about setting up a new friends group to operate along their creek frontage.

As the project has unfolded and more and more people became interested we were able to attract new funding. The Shire of Yarra Ranges has funded an infrared camera on a stick to be shared between the different environmental groups for monitoring the nest boxes.

The project has had a very positive response from our partners and the community. We are keen to continue it into the future.

For further information contact Sue Wansbrough by email at suewans1@bigpond.com

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Contractors with experience in weed control in extreme locations are being used to remove Bitou bush at Davey's Bay.

Bitou bush project requires extreme weed removal

By Simon Denby

Hanging from cliffs using rope climbing equipment isn't the usual method for removing weeds, but drastic measures are required when you are dealing with one of the worst weeds in Australia.

DSE, in partnership with Frankston City Council and the Shire of Mornington Peninsula, are working to eradicate the noxious weed Bitou bush along a 1.3-kilometre stretch of Crown land between Frankston and Mount Eliza.

According to Anne Dennis from DSE the eradication program will take place on the steep coastal land between Davey's Bay Yacht Club and Olivers Hill.

"Because of the nature of the terrain this plant grows on, we are using some extreme measures – including employing contractors to use rope climbing equipment to access the steep cliffs. The plants will be cut off at the base and poisoned to minimise soil disturbance, and then disposed of at quarantine landfill to prevent the spread of seeds.

"We have the opportunity to remove this population of Bitou bush for good because it is a relatively small and isolated population," Anne said.

Bitou bush is one of Australia's 20 weeds of national significance. It is a highly competitive weed that smothers and out-competes native vegetation, totally eliminating native ecosystems. The Davey's Bay infestation is one of two located in Victoria. The other, at Bastion Point in Mallacoota, is also being treated as part of the project.

"The work is part of a national strategy to control Bitou bush and will be carried out over the next three years. We will then monitor the sites for the next 7 to 10 years to ensure the infestation has been completely eradicated," Anne said.

The community is encouraged to report Bitou bush in and around their own property in both the Davey's Bay and Mallacoota areas. DSE can provide assistance with removal. Bitou bush

Bitou bush is one of Australia's 20 weeds of national significance. It is a highly competitive weed that smothers and out-competes native vegetation, totally eliminating native ecosystems.



An infestation of Bitou bush in coastal NSW.

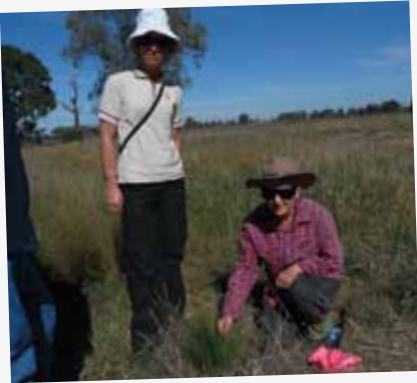
spreads easily from seed and debris and people should not attempt to remove the plants themselves.

The project is being undertaken in partnership with Frankston City Council, the Shire of Mornington Peninsula, East Gippsland Shire, East Gippsland CMA and Parks Victoria with funding provided through the Caring for our Country initiative and support from the Victorian Government.

For further information or to report suspected Bitou bush call the Bitou bush hotline on 0467 734 174.

Tackling serrated tussock in the north

By Shay Simpson



Shay Simpson (left) and Jenny Davison identifying serrated tussock on the Indigo Goomadda Road at Rutherglen.

Serrated tussock is a regionally prohibited weed and one of the 20 weeds of national significance due to its invasiveness, potential for spread and economic and environmental impacts. Serrated tussock currently affects 82,000 hectares of Victoria. In the north east catchment serrated tussock is limited to 14 known sites, all within Indigo Shire. The majority of these outbreaks are located on roadsides, with six having spread into adjoining freehold land. Total eradication at this scale is difficult, but achievable.

The Rutherglen Chiltern Serrated Tussock Project was set up in 2008 and is due to continue until 2015. The project is a partnership between local natural resource management agencies, council and the community. It is managed by a project steering committee with representation from the main stakeholders.

A recent review of the project has helped to evaluate progress and provide direction for the remaining four years of the project. The review was commissioned by Indigo Shire Council and funded by Caring for our Country.

The project has focused on securing funding for on-ground treatment of roadside infestations, community education including identifying landholders in target areas and mail outs of information, supporting DPI to undertake property inspections, installing roadside enviromarkers to identify infestation areas, and encouraging best practice to reduce spread.

The review's first recommendation was that existing mapping data should be rationalised. Two different sets are maintained – one by DPI and one by

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The review of the on-ground control works highlighted that although treatment has reduced infestations by up to 80 per cent, eradication is difficult and time-dependent.

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Tim Enshaw flags serrated tussock plants to assist with eradication.



Watch out for serrated tussock

Serrated tussock (*Nassella trichotoma*) is a species of tussock-forming grass that has spread over approximately two million hectares of south east Australia. Climate modelling suggests that the weed has the potential to infest up to 32 million hectares. Serrated tussock is similar in appearance to many native tussock grasses which makes identification difficult. Because of this infestations are often well established before it is realised that the plant is a weed.

A single plant can produce an estimated 100,000 seeds per year, which can potentially persist in the soil for up to 20 years. Seeds are mainly spread by wind, although it is common for new infestations to be caused by the transport of infected fodder and seeds attached to vehicles.

Serrated tussock is drought tolerant with wind-blown seed readily establishing in pasture or grassy woodland communities, especially when areas of bare ground are available. Drought conditions and overgrazing provide ideal conditions for

its establishment. The weed has a wide climatic tolerance, but is most vigorous in cooler climates with 450–1000 millimetres of annual rainfall.

Serrated tussock is unpalatable to livestock, has very low nutritional value, and will only be eaten if no other feed is

available. Formerly productive pastures can be rendered more or less useless for stock when they are densely infested by this weedy grass. Serrated tussock is known for establishing in native grassland remnants – reducing the conservation value of this already threatened vegetation type.



the spray contractor engaged for roadside treatment, which is then given to Indigo Shire. In addition, the future data requirements need to be clearly defined to ensure that new mapping is effective.

The review of the on-ground control works highlighted that although treatment has reduced infestations by up to 80 per cent, eradication is difficult and time-dependent. Involving the community in the meticulous monitoring of sites was suggested. In addition, education regarding the risk of slashing known sites needs to be undertaken in a timely manner. Burning could be trialled as a control method and integrated control for other weed species should also occur, particularly in high conservation areas.

The review revealed that the project has been effective for increasing community

knowledge of serrated tussock identification and management. It recommended that one-on-one extension by DPI be continued to engage landholders in and around known infestations.

Other recommendations include continuing with local information stands run by Landcare groups, developing extension materials on preventing weed incursion into the region, and working to engage reluctant landholders.

The success of the project to date is due to the effective collaboration of a range of stakeholders – all sharing responsibility for eradicating serrated tussock from the region.

For further information and copies of the evaluation report contact Shay Simpson on (02) 6028 1128.



Other recommendations include continuing with local information stands run by Landcare groups, developing extension materials on preventing weed incursion into the region, and working to engage reluctant landholders.



Moyne gorse project brings partners together

By Lisette Mill

The Moyne Weed Eradication Network is part of the St Helens Landcare Group. As the network's gorse project officer I have recently visited private property holders on the Moyne, Merri and Hopkins Rivers to discuss treatment plans for riparian gorse.

The network is running a dollar for dollar funding round for gorse control. Treatment will involve a combination of herbicide and mulching/grooming. The network is aiming for a title-neutral gorse control program where everyone on the land is responsible for helping each other to treat and remove gorse – including Crown land managers too.

The Glenelg Hopkins CMA Flood Recovery Employment Program has also provided assistance to landholders to manually remove emerging gorse seedlings that appeared after the January 2011 flooding of the Hopkins River.

In addition to private landholders, the Moyne Weed Eradication Network has contacted Crown land managers including V/Line, Victrack, DSE, Warrnambool City Council, and Moyne Shire Council to assist



A gorse infestation at Rosebrook on the Moyne River.

them in planning their gorse control along these waterways and their conduits.

According to Richard Hodgins from Moyne Shire Council an ongoing gorse treatment program has been in place for roadsides in the area for many years.

"But there is little point in treating a thin strip on a public road reserve if there are massive patches just over the fence on private land. This project is an excellent example of integrated catchment management where Council, DSE, the Glenelg Hopkins CMA, the Moyne

Weed Eradication Network and private landholders are all working together to tackle the problem," Richard said.

The network is also hosting a demonstration of an Ecoblade gorse machine on a private property where untreated gorse has been growing for ten years. The machine is a heavy duty slasher that applies chemicals through the blade as it cuts. The network will report the results of the demonstration to its members.

For further information contact
Lisette Mill on 0423 792 471 or by
email at gorseproject@optusnet.com.au

Gorse control gets serious on the Gippsland coastal plains

By Samantha Monks

With the wetter conditions, new and old gorse infestations are thriving. However, a strong partnership between Yarram Yarram Landcare Network and the Victorian Gorse Taskforce is continuing to grow following successful funding for the third year of the Gippsland Coastal Plains Gorse Control Program. The program was developed to help the local community specifically target gorse. The priority focus areas are Yarram, Alberton, Port Albert, Tarraville, Woodside, Darriman and Seaspray.

Gorse (also known as furze) (*Ulex europaeus*) is a weed of national significance. The plant was first introduced to Australia during the early 1800s for hedges and ornamental planting. Gorse is a dense spiny shrub that can grow up to three metres high. It has yellow pea-type flowers in

spring and autumn. A mature bush can produce over 40,000 seeds from its seed pods. Gorse is a highly flammable plant, capable of invading native bushland, pastures and plantations. It spreads along roadsides, waterways and railways.

The Gippsland Coastal Plains Gorse Control Program has significantly increased community awareness, momentum and willingness to remove and control gorse across the Yarram Yarram Landcare Network area. Since December 2009, the program has treated over 600 hectares of gorse infestations on private land.

Participants in the program are eligible to receive funding incentives of 50 per cent towards the cost of physical and/or chemical removal of gorse. Participants must agree to undertake subsequent spraying or removal of gorse regrowth



Work experience student Caleb Barlow surrounded by gorse near Yarram.

to avoid reinfestation on treated areas. Photo-point monitoring is conducted by network staff to help gauge the effectiveness of the works. Electronic mapping is being used to track the reduction of gorse cover in the future.

For information and assistance with gorse control in the Yarram Yarram Landcare Network area contact
Samantha Monks on 5175 7895 or by
email at samantham@wgcm.vic.gov.au

Bounty seekers support fox and wild dog control

By Caleb Hurrell

Late last year a \$4 million fox and wild dog bounty was announced for Victoria – rewarding hunters for their efforts in fox and wild dog control.

Eligible Victorian hunters can claim a \$50 bounty reward for each wild dog killed and \$10 for each fox killed, subject to the terms and conditions of the bounty. Eligible participants can submit entire fox scalps at 21 designated fox collection centres and wild dog skin pieces at seven designated wild dog collection centres at scheduled collection times.

According to DPI Biosecurity Officer Terry Auton feedback from bounty seekers has been largely positive as claims have been processed quickly.

“However, a small number of applicants continue to present incorrect body parts for reward and are not eligible to collect the reward. Applicants for the bounty must provide proof of eligibility which includes photographic identification and proof of residency in Victoria, land lease or membership of a nominated hunting group,” Terry said.

DPI Biosecurity Manager for Established Invasive Animals John Matthews said protecting vulnerable livestock and native animals from the impact of foxes and wild dogs required an integrated approach.

“This means utilising all available management practices including poison baiting, trapping, exclusion fencing, fumigation and appropriate animal husbandry. Hunting can play an important role in supporting an integrated management approach.

“Sustained and co-ordinated community baiting programs implemented at the same time, on a landscape scale and supported by other control techniques, remains the best way of achieving a sustained reduction in fox and wild dog numbers,” John said.

Panyyabyr Landcare Group leads the way

The Panyyabyr Landcare Group fox baiting program is a good example of an integrated approach. The program involves repeated pulse fox baiting on private property, in timber plantations and within the Victoria Valley in the Grampians National Park.

The public-private land collaboration between the Grampians Ark project, funded through Parks Victoria, and Caring for our Country has seen the project extended beyond its original area to cover more than 50,000 hectares.

Group secretary Lisa McIntyre said the project is a win-win situation.

“Parks Victoria is happy because control on private land limits foxes travelling across the valley, entering the national park and killing native animals. Private landholders are happy because the impact on their livestock has been reduced.”

Co-ordinated baiting on 91 per cent of land in the Victoria Valley has been the key to the program’s success. High participation rates means less work for each individual involved and a lower bait density required on each property.

According to Lisa funding for a co-ordinator has produced high participation rates.

“Door-knocking every property in the project area has helped to get the maximum number of people on board. Ben Holmes from Parks Victoria has also been great; we couldn’t have done this without him. And we let local hunters know when baits have been removed during the pulse baiting cycle so that they



DPI Biosecurity Officer Terry Auton completing bounty application forms.

can get their dogs out in the paddock and hunt foxes,” Lisa said.

**For more information contact
DPI on 136 186 or go to
www.dpi.vic.gov.au/bounty**

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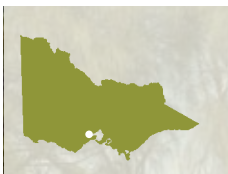
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In 2006 it was estimated that at least 30 per cent of the property was heavily infested with mature boneseed plants. In 2012 this figure has been reduced to 10 per cent.

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Students from St Joseph's College pulling boneseed at Dog Rocks Flora and Fauna Sanctuary.

Batesford boneseed challenge

By George Belcher

Controlling a boneseed infestation has been a major project at the Dog Rocks Flora and Fauna Sanctuary at Batesford, north west of Geelong.

The 83-hectare largely uncleared property, formerly known as Lilydale House Sanctuary, had become heavily infested with boneseed. The property was placed under a Trust for Nature covenant in 2006. At the same time we were successful at getting a DSE Bush Tender grant for a five-year project focusing on boneseed control.

In 2007 a Green Corps Jobs team, under the leadership of Stuart Quick, undertook a six-month project removing weeds including boneseed, boxthorn, blackberry, blanket weed, serrated tussock and olive trees. At the same time family members Ted Thornley and Jo King headed up an assault on boneseed over the rest of the property.

Invaluable assistance with weed control and other works has been received from Green Corps, Conservation Volunteers Australia, community volunteers, students from St Joseph's College, Covenant College, Geelong Grammar School and the Geelong Landcare Network. The Batesford/Fyansford/ Stonehaven Landcare Group provided both managerial and physical support.

In 2006 it was estimated that at least 30 per cent of the property was heavily infested with mature boneseed plants. In 2012 this figure has been reduced to 10 per cent. As the area cleared of mature boneseed plants expands, the challenge to keep the cleared area free of seedlings increases. The recent end to the prolonged drought has seen the rate of seedling germination explode.

Boneseed removal has mainly taken place during the cooler months. Mature plants have been removed by pulling, digging and cutting and painting, with the removed foliage being piled up and burnt. Where the fire is hot enough, much of the seed bank attached to the burnt plants is destroyed. When the ground is left clear the regeneration of native plants is accelerated.

A second removal of new seedlings is attempted within two years, with third and subsequent, hopefully, diminishing picks to occur every two years.

George and Lit Belcher are the custodians of the property. For further information go to www.dogrockssanctuary.org

Support for community-led weed action

By Kristy Roche

Victorian Landcare and community-based environment groups are partnering with DPI to control established weeds and pest animals within their local areas.

Community-led action is being supported by DPI through regulatory enforcement where groups have demonstrated a sustained and co-ordinated effort over a number of years to achieve a common standard of weed and pest control.

Community groups co-ordinate control programs that invite landholders to control pest species voluntarily. DPI then supports this effort with enforcement activity targeted at those landholders who have invasive species present on their land, but do not participate in the community programs.

Invasive species can only be managed successfully when all landholders in the area address the threat. Enforcement action by government addresses

community concern and also supports the protection of agricultural, environmental and social assets.

Enforcement activity in 2011–2012 is focused on widespread established species that have high levels of community concern: blackberry (*Rubus fruticosus*), gorse (*Ulex europaeus*), serrated tussock (*Nassella trichotoma*), ragwort (*Senecio jacobaea*), Paterson's curse (*Echium plantagineum*) and rabbits (*Oryctolagus cuniculus*).

Within Victoria, declared noxious weeds and pest animals are listed under the *Catchment and Land Protection Act 1994*. Under the Act, landholders and managers have legal responsibilities for the management of weeds and pest animals on their property.

Between July and December 2011 DPI inspected 2768 properties for established weeds and rabbits over a total of 249,794 hectares. As a result of these inspections, 644 properties were issued with enforcement notices directing landholders to control established weeds and pest animals.

Where appropriate, enforcement projects are undertaken with assistance from local councils, CMAs, public land managers and linear reserve managers such as rail companies, who also undertake invasive species control in target areas. This provides comprehensive treatment within a given area for a target species.

For further information contact DPI 136 186, or go to www.dpi.vic.au/weeds



Gorse control work being completed as part of community-led action on weeds.

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Invasive species can only be managed successfully when all landholders in the area address the threat.

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The fox baiting program has received positive feedback from local people, largely due to the benefits for agriculture in this predominantly sheep production district.

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Fox baiting program a win-win for productivity

A review of a fox baiting program that links biodiversity, science and agriculture is showing good results in the box ironbark forests of the Goulburn Broken catchment. Around 200 landholders across approximately 80,000 hectares within the Broken Boosey and Whroo Goldfields Conservation Management Networks have been fox baiting for the past six years.

Conservation Management Networks work across private and public land, recognising that plants and animals – especially pests – exist everywhere and we all must work together to tackle the problem.

In the Broken Boosey and Whroo Goldfields Conservation Management Networks the fox baiting program connects biodiversity protection with farming practice and reaches those landholders who may not normally prioritise biodiversity in carrying out their land management activities. Foxes are the major predator of many threatened species, so addressing the fox population is vital to the survival of our native fauna.

Bringing public and private landholders together

While some farmers in the area already baited for foxes, it was usually carried

out on an individual basis with little or no co-ordination between landholders. The Broken Boosey and Whroo Goldfields Conservation Management Networks recognised that a whole of landscape approach would be more effective.

The networks provided the connection between public land managers, such as Parks Victoria and the Department of Defence Army base at Puckapunyal, and private landowners so that baiting could be co-ordinated across large areas.

Private landholders were engaged through local media and Landcare groups, who were strong supporters of the program. All landholders within the project areas were offered places in an accredited Farm Chemical Users Certificate and 1080 Endorsement course so they could obtain the necessary permits and access the required number of 1080 fox baits to bait in a co-ordinated manner on private land across the project areas.

The training (funded by the Broken Boosey and Whroo Goldfields Conservation Management Networks) has built the capacity of the community for fox baiting in the long term and will have a positive impact on all threatened species in the area.



A Broken Boosey fox bait collection day at Picola.



Whroo Goldfields Conservation Management Network fox baiting co-ordinator Ian McClaren with landholder Pat Keaveny who participated in the project.

“

The program also helped to raise the profile of the threatened species in the area by highlighting the problem of fox predation on carpet pythons, bush-stone curlews, brush-tailed phascogales and broilga chicks.

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and the environment

By Janice Mentiplay-Smith

The training days brought lifestyle farmers and traditional farmers together. Motivations for engaging with the project were varied. A sheep farmer and long-time resident said, “We don’t have any sheep at the moment, but I’ll bait for your little (carpet) pythons.” A new lifestyle farmer said they had become involved because they wanted to fit in with the farming community and to do the right thing.

Since the baiting program began, the land manager of Winton Wetlands, Goulburn-Murray Water (now Winton Wetlands Inc) has joined the project by baiting approximately 3000 hectares around the Winton Wetlands, further enhancing the efforts of landholders in the Broken Boosey Conservation Management Network.

Gaps identified

The review identified the need for a rigorous and scientifically sound monitoring program to track the impact of the fox baiting program. Pre- and post-baiting spotlight monitoring was carried out in both network areas during the first two years but it was on an ad hoc basis.

The spotlight data showed that in 2006 (the first year of baiting) in the Chesney Vale district of the Broken Boosey Conservation

Management Network, 54 foxes were sighted on the pre-baiting survey and 36 on the post-baiting survey. This indicates a significant decrease but an efficient, properly funded monitoring program is needed so hard data can be obtained.

The fox baiting program has received positive feedback from local people, largely due to the benefits for agriculture in this predominantly sheep production district. Warby Range Landcare Group member and sheep producer Doug James reported a 10-15 per cent increase in lamb survival after the baiting in 2006.

Raising the profile of threatened species

The program was also a social success. Landholders felt that they were not operating in isolation in tackling the large fox population; they were part of an organised, co-ordinated program, and were playing their part to address a local and well-known problem.

The program also helped to raise the profile of the threatened species in the area by highlighting the problem of fox predation on carpet pythons, bush-stone curlews, brush-tailed phascogales and broilga chicks.



A red fox cub leaving an earthen den in the box ironbark forests of the Goulburn Broken catchment.

Landholders were able to hear the latest research findings on fox control at a Foxpo Expo, where fox behaviour researcher Andrew Carter from Charles Sturt University presented his findings to 80 locals. Dr Carter’s research is being used by the conservation management networks and partners to improve practices such as bait placement and density so the effectiveness of the program is maximised.

The fox control program has provided a practical focus for bringing local people together around the issues of productivity and biodiversity.

For more information contact Janice Mentiplay-Smith on 5761 1644 or by email at janicem@gbcm.vic.gov.au

Collaborative weed control on the urban fringe

By Simon Denby

Tackling weeds successfully and in a cost-effective way depends on many different people working together across both public and private land. This is a big ask, but one which the Urban Fringe Weed Management Initiative has been able to overcome.

There are many obstacles to collaborative, cross-tenure approaches to weeds – these can include the lack of an agreed strategy, funding requirements that don't allow for cross-tenure investment; differences in occupational health and safety standards, conflicting public liability insurance requirements, data sharing problems across organisations and insufficient resources.

The Urban Fringe Weed Management Initiative is a four-year program set up by the Victorian Government to address these barriers. It aims to achieve better weed control in the urban fringe area by building effective partnerships between government agencies, local councils and the community.

Weeds are being tackled that threaten key public land assets across seven local government areas in Melbourne's peri-urban areas. The state is contributing



Members of the Cardinia Project Working Group with local councillors and friends group members.

\$4 million over the four years with local councils providing matching funds.

Seven working groups with members from agencies and community have been established to lead the decision making for each project, including asset identification, weed prioritisation and determining and evaluating project activities.

High threat weeds targeted at Cardinia

The Cardinia Creek Riparian Rehabilitation Project aims to control high threat weeds between Cardinia Reservoir and the Berwick township. This means that high threat weeds are not only managed within the various parks and reserves that contain high biodiversity values, but the source of these weeds will also be controlled wherever possible.

According to Marianne Sawyer from Cardinia Shire Council, co-ordinating works with neighbouring land managers means the chances of reinfestation are reduced.

"This project will produce longer lasting outcomes for the environment and more effective use of our time and money. In the past we have often battled the same weeds in the same places year after year because they keep coming back."

Judy Smith from the Friends of Cardinia Creek Sanctuary agrees.

"We have been working tirelessly along the reserve for 14 years, and although council has been there to support us, the Urban Fringe Weed Management Initiative has allowed for more weed control achievements with significant funding and a collaborative effort."

The Cardinia Catchment Landcare Group and other community groups are also involved in the project. Funding has been made available for training in weed surveillance and reporting, weed control techniques and other activities.

Other projects funded as part of the initiative include the Dandenong Ranges Weed Management Project, Kinglake – Warrandyte Habitat Corridor Weed Management Project, Arthurs Seat Escarpment Weed Management Project, Grasmere – Walsdorf Creek Catchment Weed Management Project, Lower Werribee River Corridor Restoration Project and the Moonee Ponds Creek Corridor Weed Management Project.

For further information contact the DSE Customer Service Centre on 136 186.

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Weeds are being tackled that threaten key public land assets across seven local government areas in Melbourne's peri-urban areas. The state is contributing \$4 million over the four years with local councils providing matching funds.

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Disease threat looms for Victorian trees

Victorians are being urged to keep watch for a fungal disease which poses a serious threat to forests in the Otway and Gippsland regions.

Myrtle rust was first found in Australia on a cut flower property on the central coast of New South Wales in 2010. It has since been found on over 100 Myrtaceae species in the natural environment. Plants at risk include gum trees, bottlebrush, tea tree, lilly pilli, paperbark, myrtle, guava, midyim, rose apple, brush box and New Zealand Christmas bush.

According to Wendy Coombes from DPI Biosecurity myrtle rust has been detected at production nurseries and wholesale outlets around metropolitan Melbourne.

"Myrtle rust poses a threat to Victorian trees because, under the right conditions, it could slow regeneration of the state's native forests after harvesting or bushfire and even change the biodiversity of our forests.

"All members of the Myrtaceae plant family are potential hosts. It attacks young, soft, growing leaves, shoot tips and stems, as well as the fruits and flowers of

susceptible plants. The first signs of myrtle rust infection are tiny raised spots that are brown to grey, often with red-purple haloes. Up to 14 days after infection, the spots produce masses of distinctive yellow or orange spores."

Myrtle rust can be spread by the movement of infected plant material such as cuttings and contaminated equipment such as chainsaws, as well as by animals, wind, water, vehicles, clothing, shoes and jewellery.

DPI must be immediately notified of any plants in Victoria suspected of being infected. To avoid spreading the disease, do not touch, move or collect samples of the suspect plant.

Reports can be made by calling the Exotic Plant Pest Hotline 1800 084 881, or by emailing photos of the suspect material, together with a contact phone number and the plant's location, to plant.protection@dpi.vic.gov.au



A myrtle rust infection on a melaleuca.

Legal protection for volunteers

The new *Equal Opportunity Act (2010)* came into effect in 2011, giving all employers and service providers a positive duty of care to take proactive and reasonable steps to prevent discrimination, sexual harassment and victimisation from happening.

Importantly, the Act also protects volunteers and unpaid workers from sexual harassment, in the same way it protects paid staff.

Sexual harassment is unwelcome conduct of a sexual nature. It includes behaviour that could reasonably be expected to make a person feel offended, humiliated or intimidated and can be initiated by an employer, staff member, fellow volunteer or service user.

Prevention is best. Taking care and using good practice when dealing with volunteers is essential. Organisations should have an internal complaints procedure that demonstrates a commitment to fair treatment, takes complaints seriously, guarantees confidentiality, identifies who will handle any complaints and outlines intervention options. It is best to know what to do before it happens.

For further information visit www.humanrightscommission.vic.gov.au. You can also email the Victorian Equal Opportunity & Human Rights Commission at enquiries@veohrc.vic.gov.au or call the enquiry line on 1300 292 153.

Around the State – News from the

Mallee

The region has five new facilitator positions under the Victorian Local Landcare Facilitator Initiative. The new facilitators will assist local Landcare groups to focus on what they do best – achieving on-ground works.

Four of the positions – northern Mallee, eastern Mallee, south eastern Mallee and south western Mallee – will be based within consortium arrangements with each consortium made up of four to seven Landcare groups. The consortiums have nominated the CMA as the host organisation, which will supplement the funding so that the positions can become full-time.

The fifth position is a stand alone part-time position with the Murrayville Landcare Group. All of the new positions will be assisted by the Mallee Regional Landcare Co-ordinator based at the CMA. Groups are looking forward to a flurry of new activity in the Mallee – the dust you'll see won't be coming from wind erosion, but from Landcare groups once again hitting the ground running!

For further information contact Kevin Chaplin on 5051 4344.

Corangamite

Landcare networks and groups in the region have been busy with project submissions for Australian and Victorian Government funding initiatives.

Nine groups in the region were successful in securing a share of the Victorian Local Landcare Facilitator Initiative to assist them over the next four years.

There has been a series of successful community events and workshops across the region. Topics discussed include pest plant and animal management, waste management, soil health, carbon farming, land stewardship and native habitat protection.

The region is also active on social media. Many groups are now engaging with their communities through regular updates on Facebook, Twitter and YouTube.

For further information contact Tracey McRae on 5232 9100.

Wimmera

The vital role Landcare plays in protecting and restoring the landscape has been highlighted in consultations conducted by the CMA for the development of a new Regional Catchment Strategy.

Landcarers have been busy progressing their Victorian Landcare Grant projects. In March the local Landcare community helped celebrate the 50th anniversary of the Wimmera Machinery Field Days at Longerenong. The event provided an opportunity to introduce our new Landcare facilitators and to celebrate the positive contributions of Landcare over the past 25 years.

The big milestones keep coming for the Wimmera as we build up to the 15th anniversary of Project Hindmarsh and a huge mid-year bash on the Wimmera plains.

For further information contact Joel Boyd on 5382 1544.

Port Phillip and Westernport

With the new Community NRM Co-ordinator team now established, a wide range of Landcare activities and events is being delivered in the region including several Catchment Advisory Round Tables. The round tables aim to improve co-ordination and co-operation across Landcare groups and local natural resource management agencies.

The first round tables brought together representatives of Landcare groups, local government, Melbourne Water, Parks Victoria and DSE. Participants got to establish personal connections through meeting face-to-face, and gained a shared understanding of what each organisation is doing.

Future round tables will concentrate on the natural resource management plans and aspirations of the participants.

The draft Regional Catchment Strategy will also be a focus.

For further information contact Doug Evans on 9712 2296.

North East

The Ovens Landcare Network, Kiewa Catchment Landcare, Friends of Willow Park and Mitta Valley Landcare Group were successful in their applications for funding from the Victorian Local Landcare Facilitators Initiative.

Groups in the region have been busy developing projects for submissions to the CMA's grant process, National Biodiversity Fund and Caring for our Country Business Plan. A wide range of funding opportunities is good news for groups.

The CMA recently completed a survey of landholders who have participated in regional soil health projects over the last six to eight years. The survey identified that over 80 per cent of the respondents have implemented knowledge or skills learnt through these projects – a significant level of practice change brought about by Landcare. The survey report is available at www.necma.vic.gov.au

For further information contact Tom Croft on (02) 6024 9107.

Goulburn Broken

The Goulburn Broken Landcare community has been busy with a series of sustainable farming, dryland farm management, pasture cropping and native grass workshops held across the catchment.



Around 40 horse owning landholders attended a series of land management weekend courses run by the Mitchell Shire and Goulburn Broken CMA in February. The courses were presented by Jane Myers and included theory as well as a tour of local horse properties.

Regional Landcare Co-ordinators

A series of courses on land management for horse owners has been run in the Mitchell Shire. Darley Horse Stud has continued their support for Landcare this year, assisting with projects in the south west Goulburn.

Projects for wetland and bog preservation and biolinks have received funding in the Strathbogies. We welcome Judy Watts to the Landcare team. Judy will be based at Yea and will work part-time for the Upper Goulburn Landcare Network.

For further information contact
Tony Kubiel on 5761 1619.

West Gippsland

Six new part-time Landcare positions have been funded across the region through the Victorian Local Landcare Facilitator Initiative.

The positions are with the South Gippsland Landcare Network, Bass Coast Landcare Network, Yarram Yarram Landcare Network, Maffra and District Landcare Network, Latrobe Catchment Landcare Network and the Avon Landcare Group Consortium. The positions will help our Landcare communities to continue the great natural resource management work that they do.

Congratulations to the Landcarers across the region for their stellar achievements at the 2011 Victorian Landcare Awards.

For further information contact
Phillip McGarry on 1300 094 262.

Glenelg Hopkins

The CMA is working with RMIT University to produce a book on the history of Landcare in the region. This book will look at how Landcare has evolved in the region over the past 25 years. Old newspaper articles and records will be researched and local Landcarers will be interviewed to capture their experiences and recollections.

Groups are underway with on-ground activities and events as part of their Victorian Landcare Grant projects. There are also some innovative activities planned to celebrate the 25th anniversary of Landcare in Victoria.

The region has received funding for six positions under the Victorian Local Landcare Facilitator Initiative. The CMA is looking forward to working with these groups and facilitators in the future.

For further information contact
Tony Lithgow on 5571 2526.



From left, Stuart McLean from the North Central CMA Board, Derek de Vrieze from bankmecu, Tamsin Byrne from the Sutton Grange and Axe Creek Landcare Groups and Maurie Dynon from the Guildford Upper Loddon Landcare Group cut the North Central's 25th Landcare anniversary cake. Both Tamsin and Maurie are on the Victorian Landcare Honour Roll.

North Central

More than 190 people attended a dinner at the Bress Winery at Harcourt to celebrate the 25th anniversary of Landcare late last year. The evening was a great opportunity for old friends to come together and to meet new people all with a common interest – their commitment and enthusiasm for Landcare.

Landcare members who were nominated for the Victorian Landcare Honour Roll were also celebrated.

The 25th anniversary of Landcare grants has provided funding for 26 groups in the region to mark the milestone with events that include tree planting days, weed control activities and nest box building days with local school groups.

For further information contact
Jodie Odgers on 5440 1883.

East Gippsland

The region's new facilitators funded through the Victorian Local Landcare Facilitator Initiative are busy carrying out post works site surveys on projects funded through the Caring for our Country Sustainable Practices project. Typical works include protective fencing around remnant vegetation and land class fencing to improve grazing management. Stock-proof fencing has also been erected to protect approximately 52,000 indigenous seedlings. The seedlings will improve biodiversity values and create connectivity through fragmented landscapes.

Volunteers have also been busy attending biological farming and soil health workshops, whole farm planning sessions, a workshop on managing threats to endangered ecological vegetation communities and an erosion day.

For further information contact
Sandie Brown on 5150 3581.

In brief

Landcare Community Grants Guide

A Landcare Community Grants Guide has been produced to help natural resource management groups seek further funding for projects. The guide includes commonwealth, state, philanthropic and corporate funding options as well as volunteering opportunities by corporate bodies.

The guide was put together by Landcare Corporate Partnership Facilitator Karen Brisbane with the support of DSE and the Goulburn Broken CMA and is based on similar grants guides produced in several regions.

The Landcare Community Grants Guide is available electronically on the Victorian Landcare Gateway. For hard copies contact your Regional Landcare Co-ordinator.

18th Australasian Weeds Conference

The Weed Society of Victoria will be holding the 18th Australasian Weeds Conference from 8–11 October 2012 at Albert Park, Melbourne. The conference is focusing on developing solutions to evolving weed problems.

The conference will provide good educational and networking opportunities. It will showcase recent advances in weed science, weed management, education and policies across Australian and international communities and landscapes.



Members of the Elingamite-Cobrico Landcare Group gathered recently for a dinner at the Cobden Angling Clubrooms to celebrate the group's 20th anniversary. Long-serving group members Les Kerr and Russell Smith were proud to cut the anniversary cake.

The conference will be useful for those involved in weed research, development, management and all levels of government. There will be plenary, oral and poster sessions as well as five field trips.

For more information or to register, visit the conference website at www.18awc.com/

Next issue – Recruiting new members and volunteers

The next issue of the magazine will feature stories on how groups and networks are attracting new volunteers and members. We welcome your contributions on this topic as well as your general Landcare news and views.

The next issue will also feature our regular reader survey. We are keen to get your views on the magazine and make sure it is meeting your needs. By completing the survey, either online or in the magazine, you will also be in the running for some great prizes.

Contributions to the next issue should be sent to the editor by 8 June 2012.

Carrie Tiffany, editor
Victorian Landcare & Catchment Management magazine

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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.