



Community Network News

Mid Loddon-CMN & West Marong, Upper Spring Creek, Ravenswood Valley,
Nuggetty, Baringhup, Eddington, Kangderaar/Murphy Creeks Landcare
Groups & other community friends



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Contact information : c/- Secretary, PO Box 2197 Bendigo DC. Vic 3554

MEETINGS & EVENTS- 2013/14

Upper Spring Creek Landcare Group – The annual Christmas BBQ event will be held at 6.30pm Tuesday 10th December at Happy Jack Reserve picnic area. Sausages, vegie burgers, bread, tea and coffee supplied. Please bring a salad or sweet to share. BYO drinks and chairs.

Baringhup Landcare Group – Christmas BBQ meeting Thursday 5th December at 6.00pm at the Loddon River Reserve The group meets second Thursday of every second month at the Baringhup Hall Supper Room.

2014

Mid Loddon Landcare Network Executive Committee meeting at the Lockwood South Primary School at 7.30pm. Monday 3rd February 2014

West Marong Landcare Group meeting will be held at 8.00pm Tuesday 21st February 2014 (3rd Tuesday, bi-monthly) at the Woodstock Hall. Speaker to be announced.

Ravenswood Valley Landcare Group- meets last Wednesday of every second month. Next meeting 29th January

Eddington Landcare Group- meet in the Red Gum Forest as notified (note signed entrance gate).

Protecting our precious old growth trees – make it a landcare priority in 2014 –

Paddock trees, woodland patches, roadsides etc

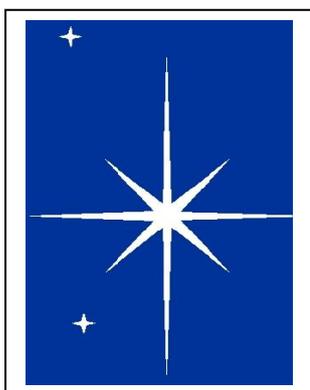
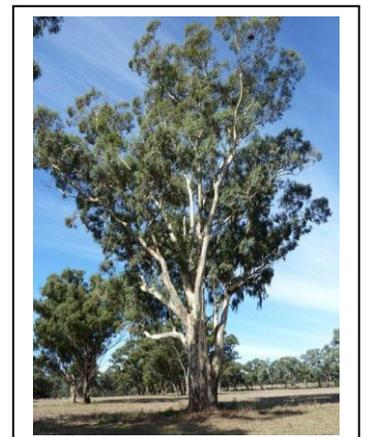
The global increases in temperature and more frequent extreme weather events like drought, and storms are having an increasingly negative impact on the health of many of our eucalypts.

Old growth trees are recognised as having very high aesthetic, cultural and nature conservation values. Their protection and management is extremely important in maintaining our biodiversity

Yellow Box still surviving our harsh environment



This Yellow gum died early this year



Wise Words:

May the spirit of Christmas bring you peace, /The gladness of Christmas give you hope,/ The warmth of Christmas grant you love. ~Author Unknown

May this Christmas be bright and cheerful and may the New Year begin on a prosperous note, and with our politicians governing our country instead of scrapping like school children.

Last issue for 2013: Judy

What a year it has been, with some great achievements by our groups, with the most notable being the success of our individual Network groups working together for both biodiversity gains and agricultural advancement.

The Baringhup Landcare Group our newest Network member is gaining numbers and strength. The 'Landcare' movement is becoming stronger each year.

Our additional Box Ironbark Conservation Management Network (CMN) which creates an important forum for Landcare, Public Land, Agencies & local Govt. and other environmental groups to meet and work together, has survived all the political turmoil with ongoing support promised from the DEPI, Melbourne office.

We became more political with the meeting of a parliamentary committee meeting at the Steel property to discuss our problems associated with a low standard of communication in the Woodstock, Laanecoorie & Newbridge area that has begun to have impacts on production results.

Our Landcare farmers have joined forces with the local VFF members to promote the need for continued State funding for our regions Landcare Facilitators.

The '**Save our Curlews**' project has progressed in leaps and bounds with support from members, agencies, wider community and sponsors. Hopefully by the end of 2014 we will be breeding a new flock of Curlews to join in with the very few (3-6) local birds. What a wonderful surprise for them to finally hear answers to their desperate calls for a mate!

Our first two promotional Curlews will need names on their enclosure – any bright ideas?

The **Shelbourne Nature Conservation Reserve Restoration project**, which has experienced many set-backs this year, will finally go ahead and although we lost our battle to save the area burnt, it has strengthened our resolve to stop any further unnecessary burning. (A plan has begun)

Bells Swamp has continued to enthral us with a growing list of rare and endangered plants and birds, with more appearing with each new shower of rain

Mid Loddon Soil project- 2013:

The project achieved – 60 farms supplied with farm satellite imagery with some delay caused by web problems and those without internet, 135 soil tests completed, 60 paddocks ph grid mapping planned with some to be completed after harvest. Communications problems in some areas were investigated with State Govt, NBN & Telstra assistance. Although we lost our funding, plans are now in place ready for the next round of grants available from the Federal Government.

2014 – Healthy Soils-

Continue to increase our knowledge of the local mid Loddon landscape and build healthy soils with an aim to increasing quality pasture and crop production and improve the productivity and profitability of the local sheep industry. There will be continued technical information regarding soil nutrition and precision agriculture technology training

Soil nutrients

- Right fertilizer source at the
- Right rate, at the
- Right time and in the
- Right place

Properly managed fertilizers support cropping systems that provide economic, social and environmental benefits. On the other hand, poorly managed nutrient applications can decrease profitability and increase nutrient losses, potentially degrading water and air.

- Increasing sheep productivity:

Animal performance is determined by soil health and the resulting quality and quantity of pasture available and with increased knowledge, better decisions can be made on allocation of stock to paddocks and/or supplementary feeding.

Nitrogen fertilizer remains in soils and leaks towards groundwater for decades

Nitrogen fertilizer applied to crops lingers in the soil and leaks out as nitrate for decades towards groundwater – "much longer than previously thought," scientists in France and at the University of Calgary say in a new study.

Thirty years after synthetic nitrogen (N) fertilizer had been applied to crops in 1982, about 15 per cent of the fertilizer N still remained in soil organic matter, the scientists found.

After three decades, approximately 10 per cent of the fertilizer N had seeped through the soil towards the groundwater and will continue to leak in low amounts for at least another 50 years.

A good idea!

Control of Indian Mynas

Wollongong City Council will train people in how best to dispose of Indian myna birds, as part of a new program to control the Illawarra's avian enemy No 1. The council receives more complaints about Indian mynas than any other bird, with about 180 calls in the past 18 months. "Intelligent and aggressive ... Indian mynas kill the chicks of other birds or destroy their eggs, or build their own nests on top and smother them," the Indian Myna Action website says. Wollongong City Council's brochure calls them "the rats of the sky". "Mynas reduce biodiversity by aggressively chasing out or killing weaker, more timid birds and other animals they see as potential competitors for food," it says. The council has teamed up with the blokes from Corrimal Men's Shed, who are busy making traps to catch the invasive imports. To get hold of a trap, Wollongong residents will first have to attend a council workshop where they will be instructed in the range of tactics to make a backyard less hospitable to mynas - as well as how to dispose of the birds once caught. The workshops will be free and will be conducted fortnightly.

Old Growth Trees:

Trees that are very old, have the cavities and dead wood that support many species that need the very special conditions that such trees provide. Many of these specialist species are already rare and becoming rarer still as we lose old trees and deadwood from our landscapes. It is vital that we retain and care for our old growth trees, even when they are dead, to ensure the survival of the species that depend upon them. It is also important that we understand the role that these trees play in the complex web of life. They provide a rich and diverse range of habitats, playing host to countless other species. However, the relationships often work both ways; many of these species are crucial to the health of the trees. The majority of species that are specialists of old and dead trees fall into three distinct groups:

- **fungi**, some of which feed off the dead wood of the trees and others that form special relationships with the trees' roots;
- **invertebrates**, very many groups, but especially beetles and flies, which live in and on the decaying wood or fungal fruiting bodies, in the bark or amongst the lichens or mosses;
- **lichens**, growing on the outside of the trees or in cavities.

Hollow trees – about 20% of birds and 20% of mammals, including bats, gliders, possums, tuans, antechinus need resting hollows.

Fallen trees and ground litter – ground nesting birds (curlews), frogs, lizards plus 20% of native mammals need rotting logs or fallen branches.

In indigenous culture teaching these facts begins at an early age ...the child is taught from a holistic point of view, and the example used is a tree. He/she is taught everything there is to know about the existence of that tree. When it blooms, the insects that live in its branches and bark, the birds and animals that use that type of tree only for food and shelter, what certain parts of the tree can be used (food or healing). Then they are taught about the surrounding vegetation, landscape, geology and climate. This method teaches the child about symbiosis, and how significant relationships of one living thing is to another, so as to gain a complete understanding of each of the organisms within the whole picture. (Extract from the 'Biggest Estate on Earth' by Bill Gammage)

Book of the Month:

Last of the Curlews - by Fred Bodsworth

In this conservation classic, originally published fifty-five years ago, Fred Bodsworth tells the story of a solitary Eskimo curlew's perilous migration and search for a mate. The lone survivor comes to stand for the entirety of a species on the brink of extinction, and for all in nature that is endangered. This new paperback edition includes a foreword by Pulitzer Prize-winning poet W.S. Merwin and an afterword by Nobel Prize-winning physicist Murray Gell-Mann.

(Copies available from the web – Amazon etc.)

*Interesting that I have been receiving calls for several years from people asking me to please find a mate for single local Curlews who call repeatedly in spring, in the hope of an answering call. - Judy

Words of Wisdom:

Desperate times need bold ideas and bold measures, even potentially "dangerous" ones. There are risks involved, but there are risks also in not being bold and willing to try different things too, especially when the payoffs may be huge. Science is about discovery. If we want to realise its full potential we must start being more adventurous.

Planning your Ground Cover for the summer months:

Ground cover and feed available are important when considering how well the soil is protected from wind or water erosion, especially during vulnerable periods like summer-autumn in southern Australia.

Ground cover refers to the percentage of the soil surface that is covered by vegetation, either attached to living plants or lying on the surface.

When ground cover is low (<50%) water runoff and soil loss increases dramatically, plants are weakened as there is low leaf area and soil microbial activity and organic matter is reduced. Weed invasion is encouraged when ground cover is low.

20% Ground Cover



40% Ground Cover



70% Ground Cover



90% Ground Cover



Photos supplied courtesy of Meat and Livestock Australia and NSW Department of Primary Industries

Minimum recommended ground cover on flat/undulating heavy soils is 70% and ideally 100% on sloping or fragile soils.

Minimum FOO levels for different soils and slopes are provided below but local advice on the optimum ground cover and minimum FOO for different situations should be obtained.

Suggested minimum FOO for different soils and topography

Soil Type	Flat	Undulating	Steep
Clay, Clay Loam	800 kg/ha	1000 kg/ha	1200 kg/ha
Sandy Loam, Sand	1000 kg/ha	1200 kg/ha	NA