



Community Network News

*Mid Loddon-CMN & West Marong, Upper Spring Creek,
Ravenswood Valley, Nuggetty, Baringhup, Eddington*



Landcare Groups & other community friends

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



MEETINGS & EVENTS - 2014

Upper Spring Creek Landcare Group

Meeting to be held at 7.30pm on Tuesday 14th October at the Lockwood South Primary School
New members or just visitors, welcomed

Agenda:

Raising Curlew funds – new ideas for discussion and planning-

Constructive planning for the use of our newly acquired box of GPSs - training available

Speaker – Ken Wellard from Neangar Nursery

Advance notice : Upper Spring Creek Landcare Group Christmas BBQ will be held at 6.30pm on Tuesday 9th December at the Happy Jack Reserve.

Special event to Celebrate 20 years of Landcare at Lockwood South,

West Marong Landcare Group meeting to be held at 7.30pm on Tuesday 21st October at the Woodstock Hall. Last formal meeting for 2014 let's make it worthwhile!

Agenda:

GRDC Grain and Graze Program 3

representative Alison Frischke will provide details of possible local trials in 2015.

- Grazing crops and stubble
- Crop and Fodder rotation
- Risk Management – Livestock & crops

(Check out the GRDC website.)

Christian Bannan will provide results of trials he has been involved in.

Supper provided

Mid Loddon Landcare Network Christmas

social dinner event will be held at 6.30pm on Tuesday 11th November – at the Maldon Hotel
Speaker will be Prof. Linten Staples from Animal Control Technologies Australia. RSVP to Judy 5435 3412

Baringhup Landcare Group - Christmas BBQ

will be held at 6.30pm on Monday 1st December .
at the Loddon River Reserve.

Nuggetty Landcare Group next meeting will be held at 7.30pm on Wednesday 5th November at the winery meeting room.

Eddington Landcare Group- meet in the Red Gum Forest seasonally. The Spring meeting date is yet to be announced

Ravenswood Valley Landcare Group.

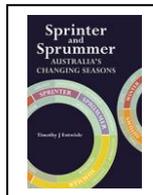
Next meeting to be held at 7.30pm on Wednesday 26th November

Mid Loddon Landcare Network Management Committee

meeting to be held at the Lockwood South Primary School at 7.30pm. Monday 24th November 2014.

ACUP certificates (Chemical use) updates - Anyone interested in renewing their ACUP certificates in November , please ring - 0428 506 525

Book of the Month:



Sprinter and Strummer -

Australia's Changing Seasons by
Timothy Entwisle

This book challenges the traditional four seasons, and encourages us to think about how we view changes in our natural world.

Since 1788, Australia has carried the yoke of four European seasons that make no sense in most parts of our country. We may like them for historical or cultural reasons, or because they are the same throughout the world, but they tell us nothing of our natural environment. It's time to reject to those seasons and to adopt a system that brings us more in tune with our plants and animals.

Sprinter and strummer proposes a new five season approach, explaining the characteristics of each season, along with the biological changes that define them. Using examples from his 25 years working in botanic gardens, the author illustrates how our natural world really responds to seasonal changes in temperature, rainfall and daylight, and why it would be better to divide up the year based on what Australian plants do rather than ancient rites of the Northern Hemisphere.

Available from CSIRO Publishing \$29.95

Continuing illegal removal of fire wood from local public and private land and project sites vandalised:

Many of us purchase firewood and in the past winter extremes, perhaps the need has been greater than usual, but is important to only buy wood from reputable and registered wood suppliers.

Logs on the ground along our roadsides and in our local forests and private woodlands provide important food sources for our dwindling remnant wildlife, in particular ground dwellers such as our Bush Stone-curlews.

It has been disappointing to find not only important and much needed habitat being destroyed but important project site signage damaged and stolen. These projects are funded by community grants (our money). Please report anyone acting illegally in our area.

Save our Bush Stone-curlew project:

Our second Curlew enclosure has been installed this week. Hopefully we will be able to access another pair of captive bred Curlews quite soon in the next step towards an eventual local breeding and release program. We are grateful to our dedicated local landcare members who not only provide land for these enclosures but also their time and effort in caring for our precious birds.



GPS Purchase:

Join a local forest monitoring program. Upper Spring Creek Landcare Group has just purchased a supply of GPS. There will be free training in their use available in the next few weeks, details will be forwarded as soon as possible dates are finalised.

Rabbit control – the pesky rascals are breeding well in some areas. Bendigo Tafe student class has been on rabbit patrol & control along tributaries of the Little/Smokey Creek. Each year the landcare groups supports the Tafe Conservation and Land

Management Course training classes, by providing sites. In return this year a section of the Little creek line was assessed for rabbit infestations and dealt with appropriately.

Farm projects:

The final FSS program meeting was held recently at the Laanecoorie Hall supper room. The 2014 Farm biomass satellite images were handed out by Andrew Whitlock from Precision Ag and trial sites were viewed and discussed. Some trial results were inconclusive due to a lack of spring rain.



Those who were unable to attend will receive their maps in the mail. We are planning on a much smaller Agricultural Production Program in 2015, involving all farming groups and concentrating on providing information about grazing grain management and crop/pasture micro-nutrient supply.

“Thanks to those who have forwarded cheques for the previous year’s outstanding soil test payments, with still a few to go. I was beginning to think I would need to get a second job to reimburse the landcare account. The project manager is always responsible for all project shortfalls!” - Judy

IMPROVEMENTS in the efficiency of rainfall capture and soil water management promise to deliver valuable productivity benefits to growers in the northern cropping region.

Research being undertaken as part of the Grains Research and Development Corporation’s (GRDC) water use efficiency initiative is showing that pre-crop management is more important than in-crop management in lifting the water use efficiency (WUE) and yield of wheat cropping systems.

According to the research, it is the pre-crop practices of fallow weed management, rotation choice, long-term stubble retention and reduced tillage which are likely to have the greatest impact on fallow water storage and therefore WUE and crop yield.

Put simply, it is the combining of best practices that will contribute to the more efficient storage and use of available water.

Addressing growers and agronomists at the GRDC Northern Research Updates in central western NSW earlier this year, CSIRO researcher Neal Dalgliesh said while the benefits of stored soil water to crop production were well documented, there was less understanding over the processes involved in the capture and storage of rainfall for future crop production.

“There is a real need for farmers and advisers to have a good understanding of how soils work in relation to water capture and storage and why some soils have the ability to hold more water for crop use than others,” he said.

“Such baseline information collated in conjunction with the seasonal monitoring of soil water, using tools that can range from something as simple as a push probe to simulation modelling allows the setting of realistic decisions and goals on crop choice, inputs and yield potential.”

Tools to monitor stored soil water have been used by growers for many years, however Mr Dalgliesh said additional tools were available to better define the productive capacity of soils and for the routine seasonal monitoring of water resources for capture and utilisation by crops or weeds.

Excerpt from Queensland Countrylife

New Policies needed to save Old Trees: Averting a Global Crisis.

Large old trees are critical organisms and ecological structures in forests, woodlands, and agricultural and urban environments. They play many essential ecological roles ranging from the storage of large amounts of carbon to the provision of key habitats for wildlife. Some of these roles cannot be replaced by other structures. Large old trees are disproportionately vulnerable to loss in many ecosystems worldwide as a result of accelerated rates of mortality, impaired recruitment, or both. Drivers of loss, such as the combined impacts of fire and browsing by domestic or native herbivores, chemical spray drift in agricultural environments, and post disturbance salvage logging, are often unique to large old trees but also represent ecosystem-specific threats. New policies and practices are urgently needed to conserve existing large

old trees and restore ecologically effective and viable populations of such trees by managing trees and forests on much longer time scales than is currently practiced, and by protecting places where they are most likely to develop.

Without these steps, large old trees will vanish from many ecosystems, and associated biota will be severely diminished or lost.

David R Lindenmayer and associates- if you are interested in a copy of the complete paper please contact Judy.

Bush Stone-curlew Survival

The continued survival of our small number of local Curlews and those we hope to breed and release will depend on available food

Bush Stone-curlews have a remarkable courtship dance. Individuals stand with their wings outstretched, their tail upright and their neck stretched slightly forward. The birds will stamp their feet up and down, like a soldier marking time. This courtship ritual is repeated for an hour or more at a time and is accompanied by loud and constant calling. Eggs are laid in a shallow scrape in the ground and both adults share the incubation and care for the young.

The importance of logs on the ground:

Fallen coarse woody debris (i.e. logs) in forests provides habitat for a range of fauna. In particular, hollows (i.e. cavities) in these logs provide shelter and sites for breeding and rearing of young for a diverse array of vertebrate fauna, including many mammals, reptiles, amphibians and some species of birds.

Changes in the availability of shelter and breeding sites may alter the diversity and abundance of fauna. Hence consideration of the conservation of hollow logs requires incorporation into forest management practices.

While considerable emphasis has been placed on understanding factors influencing hollow availability in standing timber, hollows in logs on the forest floor have been largely overlooked.

Excerpt from Biological Conservation paper – Collins, Bradstock, Tasker & Whelan

Rocks & logs:

Ground dwelling wildlife need the shelter provided by structures on the ground. These structures include fallen timber - logs, branches and sticks, a range of rock sizes and leaf litter.

Logs provide both habitat and nutrients. As they gradually break down due to the actions of weather, fungi, and termites, they release nutrients into the soil. They also act as mulch, conserving niches of damp soil, which allows soil

invertebrates to thrive and even assists plants to germinate and grow. At ground level, logs can act as mini-windbreaks, providing shelter from extreme weather for ground-dwelling fauna. Logs and sticks also trap soil and nutrients that are washed or blown across a site, and are particularly valuable in degraded sites to build up pockets of soil and organic matter for plant germination.

Natural environments or Habitat Structure is important for the health of paddock woodland remnants and also gardens - providing places for many different species to live, so if we are to replicate or perhaps even enhance such *environments*; a number of elements need to be considered. Typically there are five structural layers in native bush-land:

- **Canopy:** large trees (e.g. gums) which due to their size provide resources to a vast array of animals.
- **Under-story:** large shrubs (e.g. Acacias or Banksias) provide shelter as well as rich sources of nectar and insects.
- **Small shrubs:** (e.g. Saltbush or Correas) as for large shrubs, but typically with increased plant diversity.
- **Ground cover:** the greatest natural plant diversity is typically seen in this layer, which contributes to a rich insect fauna and in turn the diversity of many vertebrate species. Unfortunately, it is also one of the layers that can disappear in a manicured or overly tidy garden.
- **Leaf-litter:** is a layer that reduces the loss of moisture and harbours decomposers such as bacteria and fungi which return vital nutrients to the soil. A wide range of invertebrate species live in this zone and many birds, mammals, lizards and frogs forage here because of its rich offerings.

The greater the number of layers in your wildlife garden - the higher the number of potential **habitats**, or places to live, for native species.

If you only have a small space for planting, think about the other resources wildlife may have available to them: a local park, a creek, bush land or consider combining your area with that of an adjoining neighbour(s) to increase the effective size of the resource, its value to wildlife and potentially your enjoyment!

Another essential component of ground cover includes the physical assets within your garden. Rocks, hollow logs or wood piles all provide additional habitat for insects, lizards and possibly frogs, as well as bacteria and fungi, which in turn contribute to the health of your garden and provide places for many different species to live, so if we are to replicate or perhaps even enhance such *environments*; a number of elements need to be considered. Typically there are five structural layers in native bush-land: If you only have a small space for planting, think about the other resources wildlife may have available to them: a local park, a creek, bush land or consider combining your area with that of an adjoining neighbour(s) to increase the effective size of the resource, its value to wildlife and potentially your enjoyment!

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Pest-suppressive landscapes: thinking outside the field by Michele Sabto

(Check out full story Ecos Magazine published July 2014)

We've all heard of 'thinking outside the box'. Now farmers managing pests in their crops are being asked to think outside the field. The concept of pest-suppressive landscapes focuses on the capacity of the entire farming landscape, including non-crop vegetation in and around paddocks (such as patches of remnant native vegetation), to suppress arthropod pests. Pest-suppressive landscapes provide habitat and forage for natural enemies – such as ladybirds and parasitic wasps that eat and parasitise crop pests – whilst limiting the same for the pest species.

Taking a landscape-scale approach to managing pests makes ecological sense. After all, pests are mobile – they don't recognise paddock or farm boundaries in their search for habitat, food, and reproduction sites. And insect predators and parasitoids are a free good! However, it has been found consistently that native vegetation supports quite a large number of natural enemies, relative to the number of pest species.'