



Mid Loddon Landcare Network News

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



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MEETINGS & EVENTS - 2015

Upper Spring Creek Landcare Group

Meeting held at the Lockwood South Primary School at 8.00pm on Tuesday 14th July
Agenda: Salinity bore update from Max Stevens & DELWP. A very new project for discussion - Judy

West Marong Landcare Group next meeting to be held at 8.00pm on Tuesday 18th August 2015 at the Woodstock Hall. **Agenda:** TBA

Baringhup Landcare Group - next meeting to be held at 7.30pm at the Baringhup Hall Supper room on Monday 3rd August. 2015

Agenda: Increasing farm and small block wildlife habitat & Nest Box building

Nuggetty Land Protection Group next meeting will be held at 7.30pm on Wednesday 3rd August at the winery meeting room.

NAIDOC Week held from 5th –12th July 2015
NAIDOC celebrations are held around Australia each July to celebrate the history, culture and achievements of Aboriginal and Torres Strait islander peoples. The week is celebrated not just in indigenous communities but also in increasing numbers of government agencies, schools, local councils and workplaces.

Eddington Landcare Group- meet in the Red Gum Forest seasonally - Next meeting TBA

Ravenswood Valley Landcare Group.

Next meeting to be held at 7.30pm on Wednesday 29th July 2015

Bendigo Tafe 1080 course dates. Tuesday 25th August & Tuesday 17th November 9am to 1pm at the Charleston Road campus. Cost \$260 all inclusive. Enrol at 1300 554 248.

NCCMA supporting a Rabbit Control Forum. It will be held in the Network area in Spring at a date to be notified. This Forum will provide a wide range of rabbit control information so that

groups/landholders can begin preparations to begin their control campaigns early in 2016

Echuca Birdlife Group will be welcomed and provided with a tour of the Save our Curlews project sites on Sunday 9th August, with a 9.30am meet-up at the Steele's Boyds Road 'Curlew Captive breeding enclosures' for a 10am start.

West Marong Landcare Group will host a second round kitchen table morning discussion at

9.30am Thursday 30th July at Howard Hepburn's farm (a central point). Farm production member from the Baringhup and Nuggetty Groups are very welcome to attend. A few extra chairs may be required.

Tea, coffee and cakes provided on arrival with a light lunch also available.

Christian Bannan will be present to answer questions and provide verbal support to all current soil related farm production problems raised, and tweak the current project already planned to make sure it will cover local soil remedial information requirements before we apply for a State Grant, later this month.

Mid Loddon Landcare Network Management Committee 'Community Learning for Environmental Action Workshop' with Ross Colliver from the Vic Landcare Council.

To be held at the Lockwood South Primary School at 7.30pm on **Monday 27th July 2015**. Would all Network Group reps. Please make an effort to attend.

As at the general committee meetings, network group's members are invited to attend and join the discussions and put forward ideas.

Ross Colliver



Community Learning for Environmental Action

(CLEA) has a focus on knowledge and skills for *organising* community action, finding and *collaborating* with partners, and *influencing* decision makers.

CLEA (Community Learning for Environmental Action) is a 3 year VLC project, funded by the Natural Resources Conservation League and the Victorian Landcare Council. Its purpose is to find how best to support peer learning and mentoring between grassroots environment groups on the social side of Landcare - knowledge and skills for *organising* community action, finding and *collaborating* with partners, and *influencing* decision makers.

The place CLEA starts is with Committees of Management themselves, and their agenda for strengthening their Network. It focuses Committees of Management on the questions they know they need to ask and answer to secure the long-term future of their groups and the Network:

What have we *strengthened* over the last couple of years?

Where does our Network need to *break new ground*?

What is the *Question Without an Easy Answer* our Network needs to ask?

Who will we talk with about this?

Landcare now and in the future:

Landcare Groups and Networks.

Victoria has a long history of groups working together. Experience has shown that the group approach achieves better results than individuals working alone. Sharing of information with other Landcare group members can lead to improved understanding of both problems and solutions. Landcare groups also have more access to a wider range of advice and financial support than is available to individual landholders.

In Victoria there are now more than 630 Landcare Groups and 67 Landcare Networks, and more than 500 other community-based natural resource management groups. These groups have over 60,000 members and involve an additional 45,000 volunteers who contribute their time and energy each year to help care for our natural environment.

Over time, Landcare has become more

connected. While Landcare groups continue to operate at the local community scale, a large proportion of the State's groups are now linked to or are a member of Landcare networks, which operate at a broader or more strategic landscape scale.

Landcare Groups and Networks develop their own priorities, organise community's activities and can source support and funding from entities including national, state and local governments, catchment management authorities, corporate, philanthropic, private businesses and other organisations and individuals.

Over the decades since its inception, Landcare has become part of the social fabric of Victoria. The public value of Landcare is significant, In addition to the environment gains, major social and economic benefits are produced for participants and the communities in which they live.

The Mid Loddon Landcare Network now includes six individual groups whose official representatives and often other members, meet bi-monthly to share ideas, report a wide range of project successes and assist in the planning of landscape style connective projects

These Landcare groups include –

West Marong Landcare Group's inaugural meeting was held on the 7th August 1990. The members attending agreed that their philosophy would be –“Caring for our land and making it a better place for our children and grandchildren”. They enjoyed the friendship of working together planting out eroded creeks and gullies and salinity amelioration. Later their projects extended into a strong interest in soil health, integrated pest management and precision agriculture.

Upper Spring Creek Landcare Group was formed on the 4th December 1994 at the Lockwood South Hall following a community meeting held on the 23rd October, with founding members having a strong interest in local social and environmental issues, including improving the health of local waterways such as the Bullock and Spring Creek and also controlling the local pest plant and pest animal populations.

Ravenswood Valley Landcare Group was formed in 1992 in response to the burgeoning problems

associated with rabbit numbers and an increase in the spread of Paterson's Curse. The Group has been active in the management of Paterson's Curse using both chemical and biological control methods. The management of Rabbits by warren destruction, poisoning and fumigation programs. Increasing native vegetation by propagating and planting native trees and direct seeding. Monitoring salinity in groundwater bores,

Nuggetty Land Protection Group: established by local farmers in 1991 with a mission statement - "To protect the land and prevent degradation in Nuggetty and our neighbouring communities" and is now the only community group in Nuggetty.

Eddington Landcare Group – established at an inaugural meeting held on Saturday 17th October 2009 Their goals are improved water quality in the Loddon River and an increase in community involvement in caring for and promoting the Eddington Red Gum Forest.

Baringhup Landcare Group established with an inaugural meeting held on 29th March 1994 and enthusiastically embraced by local landholders. In the early years concentration was on rabbit and weed control and combatting erosion, salinity and pasture improvement.

Currently - To assist with the individual group's promotion of their wide range of ongoing environmental activities and to also assist with procuring on-going funding, the groups are just completing their Action Plans/Blue prints that include the group's individual histories, their previous achievements and their future goals. These booklets will be available to the wider community and it is hoped that they will encourage a new surge of interest in joining local landcare groups and being involved in caring for our landscape, including productive soils, our waterways, native vegetation and our wildlife.

Network Facilitator - Judy

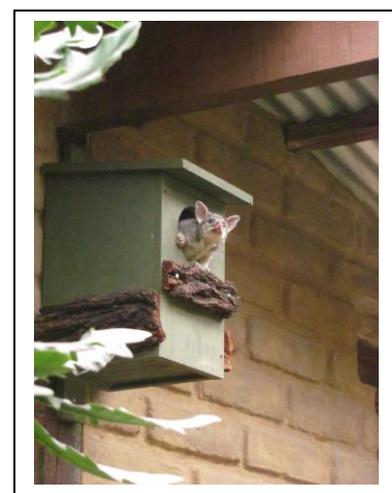
The State Government is currently requesting I provide a four year program to include all Mid Loddon Landcare Network group's activity goals for the next four years. This information will be drawn from the groups Action Plans/Blue Prints.

The on-going Nest Box Project as part of the soon to become national 'Glide-away' Project. Three past Tafe students are joining the Upper Spring Creek Landcare Group as official volunteers to continue their work on this project. **Devi, Todd and Tim** will continue to monitor the nest boxes already in place in the Shelbourne NCR and the protected sites. They will also be installing another 40 boxes along McKenzie Road. All boxes will be GPSd and maps created for future reference. The funds for the manufacture of these boxes by Miles Geldard, was provided by a City of Greater Bendigo Community Grant, as reported last month.

I was pleased to note with appreciation that at least three of ours local farmers are interested in building more nest boxes to install in our many protected remnants and connecting corridors across the farmland to the west of the forest. Thanks guys, your efforts will be greatly appreciated!

This is a project that we hope will be extended across all groups.

Why do we need nest boxes? A range of native animals and birds are dependent on the natural hollows that develop in trees and some shrubs, for shelter and/or breeding, The number of suitable nesting hollows is declining throughout Victoria. Trees are dying and falling over and very few trees are becoming the age at which hollows form. It can take over 120 years for suitable hollows to develop in an eucalypt trees. Pole Cameras will be available for monitoring these boxes, so once the boxes are installed there will be no further climbing of ladders.



The Landcare Network groups to the north and south of our area also have nest box programs in place. So it will be good to share information about what is found to be taking up residence in the nest boxes in the different areas. The monitoring information will assist in the planning of future revegetation corridors/farm shelterbelts

The importance of retaining and caring for our old growth paddock trees.



A local Yellow box eucalypt

How do you grow an old growth woodland tree?

‘Space alone doesn’t create a majestic old tree. It also needs a liberal dollop of time; time to grow and time to sag. As branches grow older, they get thicker and heavier. It’s hard to hold up all that weight, so just like us, old trees sag. New branches stretch up to the sun while the old boughs bend to the ground.

The bent boughs of an old tree didn’t always bow down low. They started off perky and erect; time did the rest. Look at the upper branches of a young tree. They don’t sag. They stand bold upright, and the angle between each branch and the central trunk is narrow (acute). As the tree grows, each branch is over-topped by younger shoots. As you scan a tree from top to bottom, the angle between the trunk and each branch widens. The top branches head upwards while the lower branches head outwards. Every low branch was once at the top of the tree, and they all started off upright, stretching towards the sun.



As a tree grows older still, big old branches bend in the middle and bow down to the ground, weighed down by accumulating wood. Compare a young tree, growing out on its own, against an old veteran tree. The lower limbs of the young tree might spread wide, but they rarely sag down towards the ground; gravity and age does that. The lower boughs of a mature, actively growing tree are often clean, with few side branches. Why don’t new branches grow along these open boughs? Trees and shrubs don’t want to invest energy to grow leaves in positions that won’t receive much sun. So the foliage at the end of each branch produces hormones that inhibit buds further back along the stem. When the terminal foliage is growing actively, the buds along the branch stay suppressed, and no new side branches can grow. *Extract from Ian Lunt blog*

Why healthy soil is water in the bank:

As soil health improves, so too does its hydrologic function. While most look to the sky for drought relief, an increasing number of farmers are looking to the soil. And for good reason: Healthy soils capture and store much more water – which can come in handy “Organic matter and living organisms provide the foundation for soil to function properly, allowing it to take in, store and deliver water to plants, among many other benefits,” said NRCS’ Soil Health Division Director, Dr. Bianca Moebius-Clune. “Organic matter causes soil to form stable soil aggregates, or crumbs,” she said. “With better soil structure, infiltration of water into the soil improves, which allows the entire soil profile to take in and hold more water when it rains.” Healthy soil acts much like a sponge, with its ability to absorb and hold much of its volume in water\

Crop rotation is an integral part of the crop production system. The greatest benefit to a good crop rotation is increased yields. A well-planned crop rotation will help with insect and disease control and aid in maintaining or improving soil structure and organic matter levels. Using a variety of crops can reduce weed pressures, spread the workload, protect against soil erosion and reduce risk. Legume crops in the rotation have become more valuable with the increased cost of nitrogen. Research and experience have proven that a good crop rotation will provide more consistent yields, build soil structure and increase profit.