



## **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 & 2016**

#### **Upper Spring Creek Landcare Group**

Meeting held at the Lockwood South Primary School at **7.30pm** on Tuesday 13<sup>th</sup> October

**Agenda:** Devi Shanty & Tim McCaw presenting their nest box project results.

#### **West Marong Landcare Group**

Meeting to be held at **7.30pm** on Tuesday 20<sup>th</sup> October 2015 at the Woodstock Hall.

**Agenda: Presentation by Ray Gattis** from the recycling plant at Carisbrook producing pelletised agricultural fertilizer. Ray is interested in talking with our farmers regarding possible trial sites.

**Baringhup Landcare Group** - next meeting to be held at 7.30pm at the Baringhup Hall Supper room on Monday 5<sup>th</sup> October . 2015 - other groups members welcome

**Agenda:** Climate Change – Terry White

**Nuggetty Land Protection Group** next meeting will be held at 7.30pm on Wednesday 7<sup>th</sup> October at the winery meeting room.

#### **Eddington & Baringhup Landcare Groups**

Bells Swamp Management Plan update & Eddington Red Gum Forest Vegetation Transects report by Wetland ecologist, Damien Cook

**Venue:** Eddington Community Hall at 8.00pm on 29<sup>th</sup> October.

**Eddington Landcare Group**- meet in the Red Gum Forest seasonally - Spring meeting will be held at the Eddington store .TBA

#### **Ravenswood Valley Landcare Group.**

Next meeting to be held at 7.30pm on Wednesday 25<sup>th</sup> November 2015

**Network Individual Member Groups end of year Christmas celebration events** - details to be included in November Newsletter

#### **Mid Loddon Network Landcare Groups**

##### **Annual dinner**

**Date:** Thursday 12<sup>th</sup> November @ 6.00pm for socialising and 6.30pm for dinner which will be a set roast and sweet menu @ \$18.00 each.

**Venue:** Maldon Hotel

**RSVP** to Judy 5435 3412 by 9<sup>th</sup> November

**Key note Speaker:** Dr Dan Harley from Zoos Victoria

“At the heart of fighting wildlife extinction is the need for robust science. As Zoos Victoria’s Threatened Species Biologist, Dan’s work underpins our efforts to save 20 of Australia’s most endangered species from extinction. Dan is part of a 700 strong workforce at Zoos Victoria that is dedicated to fighting wildlife extinction”

##### **Mid Loddon Landcare Network Management Committee Meeting**

To be held at the Lockwood South Primary School at 7.30pm on **Monday 30<sup>th</sup> November 2015.**

**Agenda:** General meeting plus group’s reports on promotional planning

**The Nuggetty Land Protection Group (NLPG)** has gained funding for the researching and writing of a landscape history of the Nuggetty district, which is an area about 5 kilometres north of Maldon. As part of the project, NLPG is collecting spoken and visual material from people living in, or having a connection with, the area. Environmental historian, Robyn Ballinger, will be conducting FREE training workshops in Maldon on how to undertake oral history interviews.

The training sessions will be held at the Maldon Neighbourhood Centre, corner of Edwards and Church Streets, on Wednesday 14<sup>th</sup> October (6.30-9.30pm) and Thursday 15<sup>th</sup> October (2.30pm – 5.30pm)

Contact Jane Mitchell 54

## **2015 International Year of Soils**

<http://www.farmerhealth.org.au/2015-photo-competition-stewards-of-the-soil>

### **Stewards of the Soil – Photography Competition**

“Soil is a non-renewable resource; its preservation is essential for food security and our sustainable future... Healthy soils are the basis for healthy food production... Soils are the foundation for vegetation which is cultivated or managed for feed, fibre, fuel and medicinal products... Soils store and filter water, improving our resilience to floods and droughts.”

We are looking for images that portray –

- the myriad of colours and textures of a soil profile
- the incredible produce grown in that soil
- farmers working the land and/or working to restore degraded soils
- or images that portray effort at maintaining the soil's life and sustainability

The photography competition follows on from the success of the National Centre for Farmer Health's previous competitions in 2010 and 2012. Help celebrate Australian Farming and the International Year of Soil.

### **Entries close Sunday 25<sup>th</sup> October 2015**

**Categories:** Open, Secondary School student, and Primary School Student. Cash prizes for winning and runner-up entries including a People's Choice award. *Judged by renowned photographers Jill Frawley, Ewen Bell and Robert Drummond.*

Winners will be announced at Federation Square in Melbourne on International Soil Day, Saturday 5<sup>th</sup> December, 2015

### **Network Landcare Member Groups planned events – 2016**

#### **West Marong landcare Group-**

**Field Day** commencing at 9.30am Thursday 14<sup>th</sup> January at Brian & Brad Comer property and moving on to a second property. Technical support by Soil Scientists, Christian Bannan & Roger Wrigley. Catering provided

**Farm Kitchen Table meeting** @ Howard Hepburns home at 9.30am 12<sup>th</sup> February. Discussing the observed local geological and soil condition data gathered from the field day, with technical support provided.

#### **Baringhup/ Nuggetty/Eddington/Ravenswood Valley Landcare Group farmers –**

**Field Day** commencing at 9.30am Wednesday 13<sup>th</sup> January at Col, Deb & Doug Jennings property and moving on to a second property. Technical support provided by Soil Scientists Christian Bannan & Roger Wrigley. Catering provided

**Baringhup/Nuggetty/Eddington/Ravenswood Valley Farm Kitchen Table meeting** @ Col & Deb Jennings home at 9.30am Wednesday 11<sup>th</sup> February. Discussing the observed local geological and soil condition data gathered from the field day, with technical support provided.

#### **All Mid Loddon Landcare Network Farmers-Sheep Management one day Workshop**

Hepburn/Ralton shearing shed commencing at 9.30am, Thursday 10<sup>th</sup> March. Technical support by San Jolly from SA. Catering provided

**Eddington Landcare Group** invite other Network Group members to a **Fungi Seminar** at the Eddington Community Hall at 7.30pm, Monday 4<sup>th</sup> April. Focusing on the role of fungi in agricultural, red gum forest and woodland ecosystems

#### **Upper Spring Creek & West Marong Landcare Groups**

invite other group members to join in *Shelbourne Forest Fungi Foray*- hunting fungi and observing the rehabilitation process of the Box Ironbark & Woodland ecosystems. Date & time to be announced.

#### **All Mid Loddon Landcare Network members -**

**Photography Workshop** and field excursion with world renowned photographer – Alison Pouliot Held on a Sunday in Autumn - date to be announced.

This is a hands-on, interactive workshop combining theoretical and practical sessions, specifically:

- Photo-point Monitoring to document temporal and spatial environmental change
- In situ environmental photography (both technical and aesthetic)
- Photography of people in natural environments (for example, conducting in-field monitoring, rehabilitation works etc., that may be useful in funding applications, reports etc.)
- Group Critique Session of Participant's Images.

Participants will be provided with supplementary printed notes to reinforce principles covered in the workshop.

*Gold coin donation to assist with catering*

### **Groups recent activities**

#### **Upper Spring Creek landcare Group**

#### **Wildflower wander at Casuarina Lane property.**

Upper Spring Creek members were treated to a variety of native spring floral displays in the natural setting of a granite rocky rise, followed by a pleasant picnic lunch with a view of the surrounding country landscape.

Thanks to Karen & Tony for their hospitality.

**Lockwood Cemetery walk.** Members had a pleasant and lively walk followed by morning tea. They compiled an indigenous plant list but noted that the bush section was totally coppiced regrowth eucalypts, with none of the original old growth trees ever retained. The landcare members plan to have further discussions with the Cemetery Committee re assistance from the landcare group to provide site restoration support.



**Shelbourne Nature Conservation Reserve Monitoring**

West Marong member Irene Punton supported by Janice Stewart from Kangaroo Flat completed the arduous task of monitoring the six vegetation and soil condition transects that were originally set up before the thinning restoration project was begun.

Parks Vic will be conducting a site tour to discuss further forest management options later this month and the monitoring results completed by Irene & Janice will provide important information to encourage ongoing support from the land manager.

**Baringhup Landcare Group** held a Climate Change information forum led by Terry White from the Castlemaine Sustainability Group. Participants were provided with a compilation of recent scientific world data regarding our changing climatic conditions.

**Upper Spring Creek & West Marong members** combined for a brief working bee at the Emu Road, Curlew habitat protection site to make the fence more secure from predator invasion. This site has been damaged by the severe storm water run-off from the un-thinned section of the forest. Thanks to Jenny for providing morning tea.

**Mid Loddon Landcare Network Committee** invited Ross Colliver from the Victorian Landcare Council for a second discussion to tackle the issue that was raised at the previous meeting.

**How do we get city folk to understand and appreciate farmers' issues?**

Notes from Session 2 with Ross -

**The situation:** People living in urban areas haven't grown up on the land, and don't know what's involved

in living on the land. We've lost farmers from the landscape as farms have got bigger, and as lifestyles have moved in. Urban sub-division is pushing out into agricultural land without considering the impacts. At the same time, there are people who could get involved in Landcare more, but we need to get their attention and give them a starting point. Our question can be broken down into three other questions:

- a) How can we promote what we're already doing, and give people opportunities to participate?
- b) How can we educate young people about the land and landcare?
- c) How can we get Council planners /agencies/politicians tuned into the impact of planning and what farming needs?

Each is a *different pathway* to getting city people to have a better understanding and appreciation of farmers' issues. Session 2 (28 Sept) looked at the last of these questions, and found four kinds of people to speak to: new people moving in; Council and agency planners; the media; the politicians and Ministers. Here's a summary of that discussion:

- Landcare has to cope with the fragmented landscape that urban planners create and the mess that city visitors dump, and that Council policies are mostly about what urban dwellers and big property interests, want, not what farmers need.
- The persistent issues of loss of biodiversity, fragmentation, spread of pest animals and plants, decline in water quality and availability, and increased fire risk are gradually getting worse.
- People in authority are either uninformed of such issues, under resourced, or don't think they have the authority to do what needs to be done or don't cooperate with other parts of government that do have authority.
- Speaking up on issues doesn't have to be based on research –close observation and long experience of what's happening on the ground is behind what we say. But we have to pick our issues and be prepared to keep at them for a long time.
- Speaking up requires a systematic approach to gathering the stories that substantiate opinions, and a persistent approach to getting opinion through to authorities. It also requires cultivating alliances with people in agencies who understand what is at issue.
- We need a strong base of active membership in a group to sustain that kind of effort. The question for groups to consider is whether

they think they can get to work on the long-term causes while also building the base of local membership and involvement of urban people.

- Promoting what we're doing might give quicker immediate (2-3 year) gains. But that too requires a systematic approach, sustained over time, to get a result.

**What's next?** Member groups will decide which of the pathways they want to invest time in, with the facilitator's support.

#### **Landcare Promotions:**

Check out the local Landcare Groups story in the latest edition of the Victorian Landcare Magazine

#### **Natural Weed Killer**

White Vinegar can be applied by spraying full strength onto the leaves of weeds, being careful to minimize any overspray on garden plants and nearby soil. Repeated applications may be necessary for some weeds, and the addition of a little liquid detergent may improve the effectiveness of this homemade herbicide.

#### **Melbourne Sustainable Society Institute**

##### **The effect of climate change on Australian Produce Wheat:**

Wheat growing is strongly affected by rainfall and temperature. Future projections indicate lower and more variable production and increasing proportions of grain of low dietary value. While higher levels of carbon-dioxide in the atmosphere will increase plant growth, termed the "fertilisation effect", this extra growth requires more nitrogen and can reduce baking quality with lower grain levels of protein and important micronutrients. Zinc and iron concentrations, for example, are projected to be 5-10% lower mid-century, adding to the already significant pressure of disease associated with malnutrition. Increased heat stress will also reduce wheat's dough-making characteristics.

##### **BARLEY:**

Climate change has three key effects on barley. More atmospheric carbon-dioxide increases yields of crops such as barley by about 0.2 per cent a year and may lead to reduced grain protein. Hotter temperatures will lower yields. It is predicted that by mid-century these two factors will largely cancel each other out, followed by net declines in both yield and quality. There remains uncertainty about how global warming will affect rainfall but the risk appears to be for less rain, and hence lower grain yields, across southern Australia's cropping belt, although small increases in some areas are possible.

##### **LAMB:**

"Spring lamb" refers to the seasonal peak of lamb

produced during spring. This production system relies on sheep grazing on highly nutritious pastures during winter and spring. Climate projections for reduced spring rainfall, and greater variability in rainfall patterns in southern Australia, will challenge this traditional production system. Alternative systems will be needed to adapt. In drought tolerant native shrubs such as saltbush, and perhaps also increased feedlot-finishing of lambs to manage the uncertainty of seasons

#### **Risk management?**

Risk management is the activity when we:

- identify various risks and assess their significance;
- develop methods to minimise or avoid some risks using available resources;
- develop strategies to manage the risk that remains.

Climate risk management involves being proactive in tackling the risks that Australia's highly variable climate can raise, rather than simply taking what comes. The best way to do this is by the strategic use of climate information when planning and making on farm decisions. A broad range of actions are possible to combat those times when climatic extremes become a risk. These may include:

- using early warning and response systems, such as seasonal outlooks or weather forecasts;
- strategic diversification to spread the risk
- whole-farm planning and resource allocation to activities or seasons or year
- infrastructure design, e.g., dams, wind breaks, animal shelters, land contours, drip irrigation and so on.

#### **Helmeted Honeyeater** – *Critically endangered*

Have you seen this small brightly coloured honeyeater?



The Helmeted Honeyeater was proclaimed the Victoria Bird Emblem in 1971

#### ***Words of wisdom***

All good work is done the way ants do things, little by little!