



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 – 2017

Upper Spring Creek Landcare Group

Next general meeting will be held at 7.30pm on Tuesday 14th February 2017 at the Lockwood South Primary School.
Agenda: Members project updates

Nuggetty Land Protection Group.

The next general meeting will be at the Nuggetty Vineyard at 7.30pm on Wednesday 5th April, 2017

West Marong Landcare Group –

Next meeting to be held at 8.00pm at the Woodstock Hall on Tuesday 18st April 2017
Held over from the February meeting.

Agenda: General meeting followed by a pictorial presentation about the state of our waterways following our 2016 wet winter.

So much effort and project funds were put into repairing our waterways a few years ago, what is their current condition? Is it time for more repair? This report was missed at the previous meeting due to time constraints.

Mid Loddon Landcare Network

The next committee meeting will be held on Monday 27th March, 2017 at 7.30pm at the Lockwood South Primary School.

Agenda: A busy one!!

- A brief report from our farming members about the recent two day workshop with San Jolly. Was it successful? Moving on to the final workshop in this Sheep Nutrition & Management, in Spring.
- Ross Colliver will return for a brief update about our member groups current and changing directions.

Getting urban people more involved.

The Network has improved communication and set up a lot of

Ross Colliver from the CLEA project will facilitate a brief review by the committee

Ross will also introduce -

NatureShare which is a user friendly Citizen Science portal for recording flora and fauna observations by individuals and groups across Victoria. NatureShare was conceived, designed and implemented in 2009, with initial funding from the then DSE's 'Vision for Werribee Plains' project. It continues to develop in partnership with Riddells Creek Landcare and the Australian Plants Society Keilor Plains Group and Trust for Nature. In this presentation you'll hear from Gill Best about the history and philosophy behind NatureShare, and from James Booth you will learn about how to use NatureShare in a variety of different ways.

Ravenswood Valley Landcare Group

Next general meeting will be held at 7.30pm on Wednesday 29th March 2017 at the Harcourt North Hall.

Agenda: Paterson's Curse control.

Baringhup Landcare Group

Next Annual and general meetings will be held at 7.30pm on Monday 1st May 2017. **Agenda:** TBA

Eddington Landcare Group- meet seasonally.

Next meeting will be held at the Eddington store or in the Red Gum Forest to share morning tea and current group activities. TBA

Current project – Constructing & installing fence stiles to allow easier access to the Loddon for families interested in fishing in the river near the Eddington bridge.

Words of Wisdom:

“There is no way that we can predict the weather six months ahead beyond giving the seasonal average”

— Stephen Hawking,

Events 2017

Ravenswood Valley Landcare Group Event

2nd Soil Pit Field Day with Christian Bannan at 8.30am to noon on Monday 20th March.

So much was learnt at the first event and this time we will be investigating more farm production paddocks in preparation for the 2017 planting season.

Sorry there will be no exciting bogging examples as at the previous field day.

Wear strong shoes, hats and BYO water.

Morning tea will be provided.

Venue – 58 Fogartys Gap Road, Bryan & Tricia Balmer & Tony Cordy



The previous Field Day was very wet underfoot But you will need your hat and water bottle for this one.

Mid Loddon Landcare Network Members and wider agricultural productive community Sheep management knowledge building and sharing Workshops



The second in a series of agricultural workshops was held on the 1st & 2nd March at the Laanecoorie Hall and in the field with over 20 landholders attending on both days.

As promised, San Jolly from Productive Nutrition in South Australia provided a massive amount of sheep management advice to local producers.

The farmers attending were encouraged to share their experiences both good and bad, during the previous

twelve months, when the seasons changed from drought conditions to above average rainfall.

The importance of feed testing was discussed again and San was pleased to hear some were actually beginning to do this.

On the second day members met at the Hepburn/Ralton farm to inspect Lachies new feed lot at the site that was visited at the last workshop with all agreeing it was a successful addition to a sheep management enterprise. San also raised the need for farmers to consider the advantages of using Auto Sheep Drafts.

The Group moved on to inspect Doug & Col Jennings hay and pasture paddock where their ewes would be lambing shortly. The group also re-visited Doug's feedlot and then moved on to look at a site at Laanecoorie that Barry & Rohan Broom were planning to build their feed lot.

Lunch was again provided in the cool of the Laanecoorie Hall with San providing a rap up of all that had been learnt over the two day event. Several members are planning feed trials that can be visited at the final workshop in Spring. To encourage feed testing for checking at the next workshop an incentive of \$100 was offered by the Network towards the first ten farmers feed testing.

Improving the nutritive value of hay and straw

A simple water-based fortifying mixture of urea, sulphate of ammonia, and molasses can help to improve the palatability and feed value of round-baled hay or straw. Research has shown that molasses, containing sugars and minerals, is an important ingredient, since it stimulates the animal's appetite and digestive processes.

Making the mixture

For each 1,000 kg hay, mix:

16 kg urea

4 kg sulphate of ammonia

70 L molasses

50 L water

Procedure

(Note: Freshly made bales should not be treated until at least three to four weeks after baling, to give them time to settle.)

1. Make a hollow spear from aluminium piping; pierce six holes at its pointed end.
2. Fully insert the spear into each round bale of crop-stubble or mature-pasture hay.
3. Using a small fire-fighting unit or jetting rig adjusted to deliver 25 L of solution per minute, pump the liquid through the spear. This allows the operator 1 to 2 minutes to administer the solution.

4. As the pressurised solution squirts from the holes and runs around the internal layers of the bales, slowly withdraw the spear.
 5. A fast-acting, on-off trigger allows you to reposition the spear without wasting any of the solution.
 6. For uniform distribution in a 500 kg round bale, an average of 25 evenly spaced injection sites are needed (see figure 1). Good distribution of the mixture through the hay usually takes about 1 week, depending on the coarseness of the hay and the density of the bale.
- San Jolly - Productive Nutrition.

Clean Up Australia Day

Happy Jack Reserve was made spotless on Sunday 5th March by John Thompson, who is a dedicated Reserve Committee member. Thanks John. Members of the Bendigo Field Naturalists Group have committed to clean up in the southern section of the Shelbourne NCR in April. (cooler weather) Landcare members will be notified when the date is organised. Any additional local landholder assistance would be appreciated.

Happy Jack Reserve Management

A meeting was held last Friday at the Reserve between COGB staff, Debbie Wood, Manager Parks & Natural Reserves, City of Greater Bendigo & Jodie Ellis and the Management Committee – John Thomson, John & Kay Campbell, Jeanette Brennan and Judy Crocker. The aim of the meeting was to finally establish the different Agencies Management Zones and what the community could expect in the future regarding slashing and management. A colour coded map is being provided and will be included in the next newsletter. The small Community Management Committee operating as a sub-committee of the Upper Spring Creek Landcare Group will continue to oversee and report any problems that may arise.

Baringhup Landcare Group

Environmental Photography Training Day with Alison Pouliot will begin at 9.30am on Sunday 19th March at the Baringhup Supper room and later at the riverside reserve. This highly interactive photography workshop with both theoretical and practical components, focuses on developing participants skills for photographing range of environmental themes.

Please bring your own lunch. Tea & coffee will be provided.
RSVP to Roy Lovel - 0428 751 660

Network Fungus Identification and Survey Training Day

in the Shelbourne Nature Conservation Reserve with Alison Pouliot
10.30am Wednesday 7th June.
The fungi of the Box and Ironbark forests of central-northern Victoria are virtually unknown. Only very scant and mostly anecdotal records exist. Fungi are an important part of these forests in creating and stabilising soils, nourishing and interconnecting plants, as a food supply for animals, recycling nutrients, retaining and filtering water, restoring environmental damage and essentially underpinning their health and resilience. Effective forest 'management' would ideally take into account soil health and the interconnectivities between species and thereby include fungi. An overview of the fungi of these forests would contribute important information to the greater understanding of their biodiversity and function.

The aim of the training day is to equip participants with the basic principles and protocols for surveying fungi in the field. These participants could then further develop their skills to become leaders in engaging the wider community to partake in fungus surveying. The training day would follow the guidelines as outlined by Fungimap in their publication *Guide to Surveying Fungi in Australia*.

Baringhup Landcare Group

Fungi Field Day with Alison Pouliot
The Fungi – An Introduction to a Curious Kingdom
10.30am Sunday 11th June
This workshop will introduce participants to the diversity, ecology and curiosities of the Kingdom Fungi, specific to fungi found in the region but also within a wider Australian context. It will include an interactive and illustrated seminar on the major fungal groups, the basics of fungus identification, fungal ecology, and the natural and cultural history of fungi. Fungal specimens from the local area will be displayed, discussed and examined during the workshop. The importance of fungal conservation will also be discussed in the context of local ecosystems. Participants will also learn to recognise the

various diagnostic characteristics used to identify fungi in the field.

Following the indoor session will be an exciting foray through various local habitat types to search for species of interest. Supplementary notes will also be provided to reinforce principles covered in the workshop

Bird of the Month - White-winged Chough



Photo credit – Graeme Chapman

The white-winged chough is a large, black bird—at about 45 cm (18 in) only a little smaller than a raven or a little larger than an Australian magpie—but has red eyes and a finer, slightly down-curved beak, similar to a European chough. These red eyes become swollen and brighter in colour when the bird is excited.

The White-winged Chough feeds mostly on the ground. It is extremely sociable, almost always seen in groups of up to 10, raking through the grass and ground litter. Food consists of insects and some seeds. Large feeding territories are kept, which are often up to 1000 ha in size. White-winged Choughs stay in medium to large social flocks throughout the breeding season. These groups normally consist of only one breeding pair, the other birds being offspring from previous years. The young birds take four years to reach breeding maturity and stay with the parents during this time. The young birds help with nest building, incubation and feeding of chicks. The nest of the White-winged Chough is a large bowl of mud, which is built on a horizontal branch within 15 m of the ground. It may take several months to build if there is insufficient rain to moisten the mud. The eggs are cream-coloured, with large brown spots. When the chicks first leave the nest, they are not able to fly, and are easy prey for feral cats and foxes. The young birds are able to fly as strongly as their parents after another 28 days. Parties of Choughs

are known to kidnap young birds from neighbouring groups. The social antics of these birds in your garden can be very entertaining. **Victorian Landcare and Catchment Management Magazine**

Email: editorviclandcare@gmail.com

We are seeking stories about how Landcare groups and networks are monitoring, planning for and responding to the changing climate. Carrie Tiffney the Editor will assist you with producing your stories.

Saving our Bush Stone-curlews in 2017



Our very cute Curlew chicks have now become teenagers

Curlew update

Many thanks for a very generous donation from one of our local farmers and some helpful grant excesses, we can now build the program's first enclosure extension which will enable our carers to begin planning for future breeding successes. Hopefully we can raise the additional funds to enable the second much needed enclosure extension soon. We already have another possible donation to be confirmed.

The partnership with our NSW Curlew breeding experts has taken a step forward and our excess birds will be released in NSW this year and then when we are better prepared for our first big release next year, they will send their excess birds to us. This will mean a bigger flock and a wider genetic variability in the birds we release. The calls from a flock of Curlews will hopefully be heard again next year around the Wallaby Forest Reserve.

Jenny Steele's dedication to finding homes for a large number Garden Art Curlews has taken a leap forward this month following a presentation to the Bendigo Field Naturalists. There are now 56 metal curlews in gardens across the region increasing awareness at the loss of these remarkable birds and also insuring we can afford to keep feeding our captive breeding birds.