



Yarra Yarra News

Autumn 2012



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Pest Control Night in Coorow

The fox shoot and rabbit workshop held at the Coorow golf club on the 23rd of March was a huge success. A total of 8 teams managed to eradicate 123 foxes, 8 feral cats and around 250 rabbits during the night from Friday to Saturday.

Organised by the Yarra Yarra Catchment Regional Council the shoot linked in with the “Red Card for Rabbits and Foxes” weekend; a state-wide program aimed at combining local efforts in feral pest control to achieve a greater effect for the Australian wildlife and its habitat.

As part of this program Stockbrands donates \$5 per fox and feral cat shot on that weekend to the Royal Flying Doctors. The results show that a total of \$655 will go to this worthy cause on behalf of the Coorow and Watheroo guys!

The event was combined with a presentation on rabbit control held by Dr. Laurie Twigg, who is an environmental consultant with extensive experience in feral pest control. As a result of this presentation the Northern Agricultural Catchments Council (NACC) together with the Yarra Yarra group was able to commit a number of landholders with adjacent properties to a coordinated rabbit baiting program in April 2012 and therefore maximise the impact of pest control measures in the area.



Thanks to everyone for participating and supporting the event: Red card for Rabbits and Foxes, Stockbrands, Landmark and Makit Coorow, Coorow Seeds, Coorow Family Shopping Centre, Gronnow's Mechanair, Coorow Golf Club, Cunningham's Ag Supplies, Northern Agricultural Catchment's Council (NACC)!

We are holding a tree planting event to coincide with National Tree Day and we need you! Whether you can spare an hour or an afternoon we would love to see you there.

When: Thursday 5th July, From midday onwards

Where: Wyworrie, Carnamah-Bunjil Road

All equipment will be provided. Hardworking volunteers will be rewarded with a BBQ and sundowner! Please RSVP for catering and directions



Working with farmers to protect our natural resources

Over the past ten months the Yarra Yarra (YY) team and landholders have been working together to identify 70 sites in the YY catchment that will be planted to trees and shrubs or will be protected through additional fencing to help alleviate wind erosion. We have also been working with landholders to fence off areas of remnant bushland.

The participating landholders will be subsidised financially by the Northern Agricultural Catchments Council (NACC) for their contribution towards more sustainable farming systems, the protection of the catchments' soils and/or the protection of native bushland habitats.

Our budget allows us to extend the project a bit further and sign up a few more landholders who are interested in fencing off native bushland; we are especially interested in protecting areas with known populations of threatened species such as Malleefowl or the Western Spiny Tailed Skink. Rates of up to \$4000/km for fencing will be paid for eligible projects.

For further information about these projects please contact your friendly NRM officers on 9973 1425.



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NRMO News Roundup

The Yarra Yarra group together with an excavating contractor is currently carrying out maintenance activities on the deep drains in the catchment.

Since their construction between 2006 and 2009 the drains have been building up silt and organic materials preventing the saline ground waters from flowing towards the natural salt lake systems in the Yarra Yarra catchment.

The works, costing up to \$2000 per kilometre, are partly covered by the landholders' annual maintenance contribution and partly by the YY group's monitoring project.

The YY staff continue to monitor the quality of the drainage water and water table depth in the catchment. Updated groundwater hydrographs will be available on the website.

NACC launch a new series of Native Garden Guides

NACC's new Native Garden Guides are a practical "how to" booklet designed to make the change to native gardens easier. It is available in either a coastal or inland version and touches on planning your garden, what native plants are good to plant in your area and what plants to avoid as well as covering the benefits of planting natives which include:

- Lower water requirements
- Low maintenance
- Minimal fertilizer and pesticide requirements
- Increased biodiversity by providing habitat for birds, lizards and insects
- Strikingly beautiful and varied flowers and foliage

NACC will be running free workshops throughout the region in July and August

(Geraldton, Moora, Morawa, Lancelin and Jurien Bay) and also a fun Native Garden Guide Photo Competition. Anyone who would like to join in the fun of a workshop can contact Wendy Payne on 9938 0126 or email wendy.payne@nacc.com.au

The guides are currently available from NACC for a gold coin donation and will be available throughout the region in coming months and the information will also be available on the NACC website in the near future. www.nacc.com.au



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DEEP DRAINS BRING SALINE LAND BACK INTO PRODUCTION

Press release from the Wheatbelt Catchment Alliance (WCA)

The Wheatbelt Catchment Alliance (WCA) is calling for all levels of Government to support a regional drainage plan to transform saline effected land and curtail the further spread of salinity.

The plan will establish arterial deep drains throughout the worst salt affected areas of the Wheatbelt allowing all farmers in these areas the opportunity to dispose of saline ground water safely by connecting into these facilities. The call comes as the Alliance celebrates the successful trial of deep drains in the Yarra Yarra Catchment in the northern Wheatbelt.

WCA chairman, Max Hudson, said the trial near Gutha in the northern Wheatbelt had seen 100 hectares of salt-affected land brought back into production.

"The arterial drain 10.5 km long discharging into saline wet lands adjacent to the Yarra Yarra lake system was established in 2007, most of the land surrounding the drain had been out of production for at least 10 years due to salt encroachment," Mr Hudson said.

"A tract of 200 ha of land containing some of the worst affected areas has been assigned to cropping and revegetation trials"

In 2011 100 hectares of this land was cropped for the first time since the drain was established, with impressive results.

"Amazingly the barley yielded an average 2.5 tonne per hectare," Mr Hudson said. "Yields of up to 3t/ha were recorded right alongside the drains."

Other good news comes from environmental scientist Dr Ian Fordyce who has been monitoring the Gutha site since the drain was constructed (mid-2007), saying that there has been no measureable adverse impact on native vegetation in the discharge zone during this period.

Since the drain was established farmers have joined in a total of 8.5 km of additional tributaries.

Further cropping and revegetation trials will be carried out at the trial site in the coming years.

The WCA are currently negotiating with Local and State Government to secure funding to extend the Yarra Yarra initiative creating a further 1000 kilometres of drainage networks throughout the Wheatbelt. "This would allow Wheatbelt farmers to access the network to dispose of saline ground water safely," Mr Hudson said.



This picture was taken in 2006. Please note the tree reference point.



This picture was taken in Dec 2011. Please note the tree reference point and the drain on the left. The barley yielded up to 3t/ha.

The drains are at least 2.5 metres deep with levee banks either side to eliminate all surface flows. Ground water is finally discharged into selected sites on the periphery of the major lake systems. Surface flows are confined to shallow channels on the outside of the levee banks.

"Salinity is the biggest threat to productivity in the Wheatbelt," Mr Hudson said.

"To date strategies to manage the problem have been relatively ineffective.

"Certainly they have not produced the results that we have seen using drainage in the Yarra Yarra Catchment."

The Wheatbelt Catchment Alliance represents six Wheatbelt catchments including the Dumbleyung, Lockhart, Salt River, Yilgarn, Mortlock and Yarra Yarra catchments.

The Alliance has written to all Shires within the catchments to gain their support.

It is also in consultation with the Department of Agriculture and Food and the Department Regional and Lands

"The extension of the drains requires a significant investment, however it is an investment in the future of not only Wheatbelt farming, but the future of the Wheatbelt itself," Mr Hudson said. For the full report please contact Max Hudson :hmhudson@reachnet.com.au



Yarra Yarra News



Round Four of the NACC Devolved Grants Program Closing Soon

Applications must be submitted by Friday 1st June 2012

Grants of up to \$10,000 can be applied for by **all land managers, farmers and community groups** who are involved in natural resource management in the Northern Agricultural Region (NAR). Project proposals must address at least one of the following criteria:

- address wind erosion
- implement sustainable farming practices
- soil management practices
- soil carbon sequestration or verification activities in the NAR through the Northern Agricultural Catchments Council's Sustainable Farming small grants program.

Applications close on Friday 1 June 2012.

For further information and a copy of the application form and guidelines please contact Flora Danielzik on 9973 1451/0437 208 246 or flora.danielzik@bigpond.com

All other enquiries about the grants should be directed to NACC's sustainable farming coordinator **Sarah Jeffery** on: **9938 0110; (M) 0419 364 965** or sarah.jeffery@nacc.com.au

Please contact us if you require any assistance with filling in the application form.

Incredible edible wind breaks

The Yarra Yarra groups is working together with landholders in the region to establish biodiverse tree and fodder shrub plantings that function as a wind break and supply nutritious fodder to stock simultaneously.

The sites will be established on Helen and Harold Wass' farm (Rothsay), on Kim and Kylie Lakeman's farm (Bunjil) and on Mark and Sara Coaker's farm (Pintharuka).

A national tree day event will be held on the **5th July** to plant the site at Lakeman's together with the Latham Primary school and everybody who is willing to give us a hand. This will be followed by a free BBQ and sundowner. Together with the Morawa Farm Improvement Group (MFIG) we are planning to hold a field walk at Coakers' on the **5th September**. More information will be available closer to the date.



DATES FOR YOUR CALENDAR



- 😊 1st June - Closing date for the devolved grant applications
- 😊 5th July - National Tree Day Planting at Bunjil, please register your interest with Lizzie or Flora now
- 😊 5th September - Workshop looking at elite saltbush cultivars and the place of forage shrubs in the farming system

Data collection

Auscarbon in conjunction with CSIRO is collecting information from revegetated sites that are 10 years or older to help determine carbon-sequestration rates. If you have a site on your property and are willing to help, please contact Kent Broad (AusCarbon Pty Ltd) kent@auscarbongroup.com.au

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