

May - Jul 2005

Yarra Yarra Catchment Management Group QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER



National Landcare Program Applications

Co-ordinated effort to Reduce Salinity in the Merkanooka Catchment

A co-ordinated effort for on ground landscape-management works to reduce the effect of salinity in the Merkanooka catchment to: **improve the conditions of the Merkanooka Creek; alleviate water logging and salinity problems at shire crossings caused by banking up of water due to small or no culverts; return 1500 ha of salt affected land to production and protect 1900 ha of high yielding farming land.**

The following techniques: removal of silt prior to and around culverts, construction of deep drains, revegetation, fencing, deep ripping, and application of gypsum and lime will be used in conjunction with monitoring and evaluation.

Profitability and Biodiversity - Sandalwood Plantations

A project encouraging landowners to plant biodiverse sandalwood plantations has been put forward to obtain biodiversity from profitable revegetation. The project aims to create a native host species list for a range

of soil types in the Yarra Yarra and establish 50 ha of biodiverse sandalwood in partnership with local farmers using a diverse mixture of local provenance host seed. **As well as biodiversity outcomes, this project will also bring with it all the advantages associated with revegetation** (reducing surface run off, stabilising soil, creation of new habitats, and reducing groundwater rise).



Biodynamic and Organic vs. Conventional Farming Systems

Trials comparing biodynamic and organic farming systems to the conventional system that have been ongoing for the past 13 years are hoping to be continued at the W.A. College of Agriculture, Morawa. Biodynamic farming (a system put forward by Rudolph Steiner) uses a preparation made from all natural products

- cowdung, quartz, and medicinal herbs processed in conjunction with various animal parts. Its focus is creating a rich humus which improves the structure of the soil, in turn increasing water holding capacity leading to less topsoil, better, deeper roots, less need for irrigation and increased natural fertility.

The trials have been educating students, and the wider community on the difference in sustainability of Biodynamic, Organic and Conventional farming systems and illustrating the positive and negative impacts these practices have on soil health, soil erosion, management of seasonal conditions and water pollutants.

Goodlands Catchment Corridor Expansion and Data Collection

The objectives of this project are :

To redefine an existing waterway in a revegetated corridor that is a major link between two catchments.

To provide staff to collect information from existing bores and pits that will determine the design and revegetation requirements for the development of similar corridors in 11 major catchments in the Yarra Yarra Basin.

What YOUR Children KNOW and WANT TO KNOW about Salinity and Groundwater

Mike Johnson, NRMO, Department of Environment and Cindy Walker, NRMO, YYCMG have asked your children what they know and want to know about salinity and groundwater in our local environment.

Mike and Cindy visited Morawa, Carnamah and Kalannie schools where the children showed an impressive

extent of knowledge of how the environment is being affected by rising groundwater and salinity. Their questions were well thought out, showing many different areas for scope for future classes.

Classes were flexible to determine and cater for the childrens' areas of curiosity and included

water related experiments. Future classes will be developed by Mike from what they wanted to learn, building on their current knowledge.

If you would like to know more about these classes, ask your children or contact Cindy Walker on 9973 1425.

Recreational Lake Field Day

A field day on the 30th of June displaying information on the rehabilitated lake and demonstration of best practice valley-floor channel drainage system at Perenjori attracted 35 interested landholders and department personnel.

The project tour began at the start of the drain, travelling down the 20 km system, ending at the bunded saline lake. Throughout the tour, Dene Solomon, Project Manager explained the methods and design of the project and the contribution made by local farmers and the shire

to the project.

At present, the drain is continually flowing into the lake, yielding approximately 1.2 million litres water per day. The pH and EC of the drainage water are 7 and 27 ms respectively, recorded on the field day.

The water level of the lake is rising at an impressive rate. Hopefully there is enough water to utilise it for recreational activities in the summer.

Further funding has been applied for to complete the restoration of the lake and ensure it is a safe facility for all visitors.

For further information, please contact Dene Solomon, Project Manager, on 9973 1425.



Hidden Heroes - Will They Reduce Salinity?

The project funded by the National Landcare Program is looking at the effectiveness of enclosed subsurface drains in rehabilitating saline land.

Three trial sites, 10km east of Carnamah, 10km north east of Three Springs and 25km south of Kalannie, have been confirmed within the Yarra Yarra Catchment.

At the sites, investigation consisting of back hoe pits, soil samples and exploratory bore holes is being undertaken. The results received to date support the sites

suitability for subsurface drainage. Each site has been mapped and the drain designed to target highly waterlogged and saline areas to maximise the impact of the drain.

An EM 31 and EM 38 survey will be done in the next 2 weeks to map the salt content in the soil of the three sites. These surveys will be repeated after the drains have been installed to determine the drains effectiveness in removing salt from the soil.

If proven effective this form of drainage would provide aesthetic benefits compared to conventional deep

drainage, as they do not have the same scarring effect on the landscape. There would also be no loss of productive land as from an open drain and no surface water can enter the drain and damage the built infrastructure.

An application has been submitted to the National Landcare Program to continue the monitoring and evaluation of the project for the next two years.

For more information, please contact Cindy Walker on 9973 1425.

Community Garden at the Three Springs School

Support for the Three Springs Community Garden is increasing with a successful Mitre 10 application for reticulation, plants and tools.

An application has been made to the Open Gardens Scheme and another will be written for the Community Water Grants Scheme to improve the water efficiency of the school and the site. These contributions will all help towards establishing an environmentally educa-

tional garden.

Activities the children have participated in are: bug catching, soil testing and the introduction to a bushfood that will be planted in the garden with a taste of Wattleseed Icecream on International Food Day.

This term the children will partake in seed collection to learn more about food and biodiversity in the native bush.

Assistance is welcome from members and businesses with an interest in the Three Springs Community Garden. If you would like to be a part of this project please contact Cindy Walker, YYCMG NRMO on 9973 1425 or Sonia Rob, WMNRG NRMO on 9954 3345.



\$\$\$ Grants Available for Farmers and Communities

Envirofund Drought Recovery Round - Grants up to \$50,000 for those in Exceptional Circumstances declared areas. Targeting on-farm environmental works and measures that can: protect the land, water, vegetation and biodiversity resource base from the effects of drought; and prevent environmental damage when the drought ends.

www.nht.gov.au/envirofund/

Community Water Grants

Up to \$50,000 available for practical on-ground projects involving water savings/efficiency; water re-use/recycling; and river, creek and wetland groundwater health.

CWG Workshop 9 Aug, 10 - 11 am, Red Room, Community Recreation Centre

Farm Water Grants

Grants available up to \$15,000 to provide reliable farm water supply for in house use, homestead gardens, crop spray, livestock drinking and other on-farm requirements; optimise water resource utilisation on your farm; manage excess water that may lead to soil erosion, waterlogging, flooding and salinity.

www.wrc.wa.gov.au/owr



"Catchman" Catchment Management Software was developed by Perth based company Rokit Science in Consultation with the Yarra Yarra Catchment Management Group.

Introduction

CatchMan stands for **Catchment Management System**. It is a powerful, but easy-to-use G.I.S. (Geographical Information System) software package that you can use to manage your farm-based catchment activities.

Using CatchMan you can:

- **create and edit** your own geographic data for your farm and

catchment activities such as paddocks, fences, soil types, cropping, salinity areas, plantations and much more.

- **view geographic information** for your farm and catchment.

This data can include aerial photography, contours, waterways and property boundaries.

- **plan and monitor** activities at farm, catchment, regional and eventually state levels.

COST

Catchman Planner -\$550 for people living within the Yarra Yarra Catchment and \$660 for those outside of the Catchment.

Farm Mapping Program Available

Catchman Plus - \$770 for people living within the Yarra Yarra Catchment and \$880 for those outside of the Catchment.

Prices include GST.

CatchMan Support Service

This has been set up to help users of the software with any trouble shooting. It provides a telephone help service, which is available during business hours. Catchman Support has an annual subscription of \$150.

To purchase CatchMan and/or CatchMan Support please ring Lisa Pocock at the Kalannie office on (08) 9666 2140.

Yarra Yarra Catchment Management Group QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER

The Yarra Yarra Group is a professional incorporated Catchment Management Group formed in 1997 by community members who wished to enhance the economic environmental and social well being of the Yarra Yarra Catchment Basin. The Yarra Yarra Basin is one of four Natural Resource Management Sub-Regions in the Northern Agricultural Region.

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YYCMG Calendar YYCMG Meetings

Next meeting is on:

Thursday 25th of August

27th October

22nd December

Closing Dates for Funding Grants:

Community Water Grants
4th October

Envirofunds Round 7
26th of August

Perenjori School Garden Successful Mitre 10 Grant

The Perenjori School was successful in receiving funding from Mitre 10 for plants, site preparation and reticulation.

The School has already built a chook shed and established the infrastructure for the vegetable garden. The funding they have received will enable them to plant native plants and a vegetable garden.

Protecting and Stabilising a Natural Waterway in NW Morawa

A project funded in Round 6 of Envirofunds will be a demonstration site for the rehabilitation of an entire waterway system.

Recently, Antoinetta Torre, Environmental Engineer and Chrystal King, Environmental Officer, DOE, visited the site to provide advice on the placement of trees and installation of rock riffles to direct and control water flow. This advice will assist the landholder, Mike Johnson, NRMO, DOE and Cindy Walker, NRMO, YYCMG to install the rock riffles and complete fencing and tree planting. Methods shown to be successful will be implemented at the site and extended to farmers, encouraging them to adopt these practices.



Want YOUR Opinion to Count? - Become a NACC member

The NACC AGM is on September the 21st. To have voting rights and the opportunity to have input into the direction of NRM in the Northern Agricultural Region you will need be a NACC member. This is your best option to have an influence on where funding is spent in the future.

Membership is free and brings with it many benefits including:

* As NACC is responsible for allocating funds to NRM projects throughout the region, have your say on where funds are most needed

* Access to the latest information on natural resource management (NRM) including grant applications and the latest research results

* Assistance from the NACC network of NRM professionals throughout the region including practical advice and technical support for environmental projects

* Chance to participate in strategic decision making about the management of the natural resources in the Northern Agricultural Region

* Access to funding and

training opportunities

* Opportunity to represent your community interests on the NACC regional and sub-regional committees

* Gain assistance with Indigenous consultation, a mandatory requirement of most NRM funding applications.

Membership is open to individuals who are residents, landowners, or interested in NRM, or individuals who are a member of groups, agencies, or organisations within the Region with an interest in NRM and in promoting the objectives of NACC.

The NACC membership form which, should you wish to become a member, can be printed out and faxed or posted to NACC administration: Reply Paid 95 PO Box 95 Perenjori WA 6620 Phone: 9973 1444 FAX: 9973 1464

Alternatively, you can complete the form online at <http://www.nacc.com.au/membership.asp>.

