

Issue 07/08,
September/
October 2008

Gippsland Natural Connection

Newsletter of Gippsland

integrated natural resources forum

From the Executive...

The minutes from the last executive meeting (4th September 2008) are now available on the GINRF website. The meeting featured presentations on:

- Coastal Acid Sulphate Soils by Chris Barry, Doug Crawford and Austin Brown
- Bass Coast Shire Environmental Sustainability Plan by Paul Smith
- Urban Strategies and Frameworks by Hannah Jones

The Executive also went on a site visit of the Wonthaggi desalination plant, discussing a range of issues with Site Manager, Max Anderson.

If you would like more information on the GINRF Executive, contact Chris Barry on chris.barry@dse.vic.gov.au

Latest GINRF
Executive
Minutes

Events

Catchment Interpretation Floor Panel Project - Exhibition Launch

You are invited to the launch of the Catchment Interpretation Floor Panel Project on Wednesday October 29 beginning at 11am at The Gippsland Art Gallery, Sale. The aim of the project was for year nine art students in the Wellington, Latrobe and Baw Baw Shire areas to think about and communicate their views on the health of rivers, lakes and wetlands in their region.

The project consists of 20 large ply panels mapping out the waterways that flow into Lake Wellington. Rather than being a literal mapping exercise, students paint their interpretation of their piece of the map.

People can experience student's work by walking over the combined floor panels to explore the resulting giant catchment map. Moving over the panels allows viewers to appreciate the diversity and connectedness of the region's catchments and the myriad of impressions and interpretations secondary school students have in relation to their local environment.

The map will be on display at the following locations:

- Gippsland Art Gallery, Sale Sculpture Courtyard - 27 October to 9 November
- Latrobe Regional Gallery - 11 November to 24 November (call (03) 5128 5700 for opening details)
- St Pauls Grammar Warragul - 24 November to 8 December

RSVP for the Sale exhibition launch by Monday, October 27th on (03) 5142 3372.

Catchment health, Gippsland's wealth

www.ginrf.org.au



Gippsland integrated
natural resources
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Upcoming & Recent Events

National Water Week 2008

National Water Week is here again with the theme of 'Clean Water: Vital for Life.' Here are just two of the many events that are happening around Gippsland to celebrate Water Week.

Traralgon Creek Open Day - (18th October)

The Traralgon Creek Neighbourhood Environment Improvement Plan (NEIP) Implementation Committee hosted a Traralgon Creek Open Day on Saturday 18th October.

Beginning at 9.00am and running through until midday in Victory Park Traralgon, the event showcased a variety of environmental groups and activities in the Traralgon Creek catchment. The day featured stalls and displays from a number of organisations and community groups including:

- The Traralgon Lions Club hosting a free sausage sizzle
- West Gippsland Waterwatch with their 3D catchment model and water bugs under the microscope
- The West Gippsland Catchment Management Authority undertaking river walk and talks
- Gippsland Water will be offering free shower-head exchange to eligible customers as part of its Showerhead Exchange Program.
- Free face painting for the kids
- The Traralgon Scouts and volunteers from the National Australia Bank undertaking a litter cleanup of a section of Traralgon Creek, and in conjunction with Latrobe City Council the collected litter and stormwater litter traps were laid out for all to see
- Other displays were presented by the Friends of the Gippsland Bush, Traralgon Railway Conservation Reserve committee, International Power / Mitsui Loy Yang B, Hancock Victoria Plantations and the Environment Protection Authority.

The Water Picture - (24th October)

The aim of 'The Water Picture,' is to provide a free educational experience to celebrate Water Week 2008.

Students from primary schools in the Yarram region will be attending and taking part in:

- Water activities provided by Waterwatch, West Gippsland Catchment Management Authority, South Gippsland Water and South Gippsland Environmental Education Group down at the Port Welshpool foreshore
- "The Last Shower" performed by Vox Bandicoot

So far, over 360 students will be attending to learn more about the importance of water and catchment health and celebrate National Water Week in style.

To find out more about National Water Week please visit

www.nationalwaterweek.org.au



MDF Spring Sessions

The Macalister Demonstration Farm will be holding Information Sessions every Wednesday from September 24th to November 5th. Sessions begin at 11am - 12.30pm at the Macalister Demonstration Farm - Boggy Creek Rd, Riverslea. Each session will include a walk and talk and a BBQ lunch. Topics will include:

- **Week 1:** Fertiliser Decisions in a Changing Climate
- **Week 2:** Pre-mating Management
- **Week 3:** Making Top Quality Silage
- **Week 4:** Annual MDF AGM & Field Day
- **Week 5:** Weaned Calf Management
- **Week 6:** Grazing and Feeding Cows During Seedheading
- **Week 7:** The Unbundled Water World

For further information or and question please call Jason McAinch or Bree Walshe at DPI Maffra on 5147 0800

Over 200 students and teachers gathered at the Heart Morass on October 9th to continue work on creating the world's first Bug Blitz forest.

Heart Morass Bug Blitz Day

In a continuation of the dedicated work carried out by Gippsland students in May this year, five local primary schools met at Sale's Heart Morass and planted over 1,500 indigenous trees, continuing the restoration and stewardship of this internationally significant wetland.

Led by the West Gippsland Catchment Management Authority (WGCMA), Waterwatch, the Williamson Foundation and the Central Gippsland Schools Regional Bug Blitz Network, the program allows students to learn first hand about biodiversity and habitat.

According to WGCMA Wetlands Officer Matt Bowler, the Bug Blitz day gives students a rare opportunity to learn about biodiversity outside the classroom setting.



Students searching for Macroinvertebrates

“The aim of today was to introduce students to the complex and dynamic environment that is the Heart Morass and to improve the health of this important wetland,” said Matt. “At four key activity sites, students explored biodiversity, food chains, water quality, vegetation and the interactions of these elements within a living ecosystem.”

The Bug Blitz events form part of the Heart Morass Restoration Project which aims to restore the wetland to a place of international significance for dependant flora and fauna and will have profound effects on water quality, biodiversity and catchment health for generations to come.

Victorian Coastal Awards for Excellence

The Victorian Coastal

Council and Coast Action/Coastcare are pleased to announce nominations for the 2009 Victorian Coastal Awards for Excellence are now open!

These prestigious awards, now in their 10th year, are a fantastic opportunity to showcase and celebrate the great work achieved by individuals, groups, agencies, business, schools and government in protecting and enhancing Victoria's magnificent and unique coastal and marine environments.

There's an award category for everyone on the coast:

- Biodiversity Conservation
- Community Action
- Coastal Management
- Coastal Planning
- Coastal Culture
- Integrated Coastal and Catchment Management
- Innovation
- Education
- Outstanding Individual Achievement
- Coastal Building & Design

More information and nomination forms are available at www.vcc.vic.gov.au/coastalawards. The awards team can be contacted on awards@vcc.vic.gov.au or (03) 9637 9776. NOMINATIONS CLOSE 5.00pm FRIDAY 12 DECEMBER 2008.

Climate Change Risks and Adaptation Report

Western Port councils and CSIRO have developed a Climate Change Risks and Adaptation report to detail actions for councils to take in reducing the likely impacts of climate change.

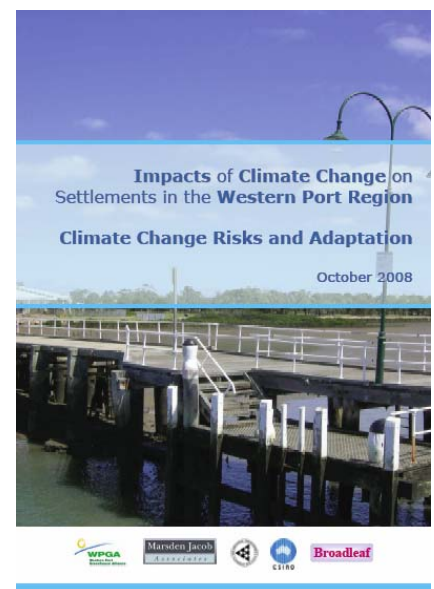
"Our councils wanted to know how to minimise damage from flash-flooding through more frequent and intense storms, what the options are to protect housing in low-lying developments and how residents can be supported in keeping their cool in a heat wave," said Greg Hunt, Executive Officer of the Western Port Greenhouse Alliance (WPGA).

The report found that temperatures could rise by up to 3.50C by 2070, 1 in 100 yr year storms might occur every 6 years and average rainfall could decrease by almost a quarter by 2070.

WPGA managed the project of behalf of the Bass Coast, Cardinia, Casey, Frankston and Mornington Peninsula Councils.

Councils undertook risk assessments around the impacts climate change may have in their own municipalities, and staff met to consider the projected

impacts and the risks that these posed for housing, drainage and the communities for which they were responsible.



Securing EG Water Supplies

East Gippsland Water is all set to commence a construction program worth some \$26 million, comprising a major new reservoir and water treatment plant at Woodglen near Bairnsdale.



The two projects are part of a mammoth \$45 million package of works being implemented to ensure the long term security and quality of drinking water supplies for 17,000 customers reliant on the Mitchell River Water Supply System.

The new reservoir, estimated to cost around \$10 million, will supplement Woodglen's existing 850 megalitre reservoir. Located next to the present facility, it will be capable of holding up to 650 megalitres of water (approximately 650 Olympic size swimming pools).

Preliminary work is due to start on-site before the end of September, with the building of the reservoir itself expected to commence early in 2009.

The design and construction of the new water treatment plant at Woodglen, which will benefit customers from Bairnsdale through to Lakes Entrance is estimated to cost around \$16 million. This facility will operate in conjunction with existing infrastructure to treat drinking water to a consistently high standard.

Design work on the treatment plant will commence shortly, with construction due to start before the end of the year and completion expected early in 2010 while construction of interconnecting pipe work for the two projects, valued at \$725,000 is scheduled to get underway in October.

[Full story available here...](#)

Cowwarr Weir Open Day a Great Success

Last months Cowwarr

Weir open day was a great success with around 500 people enjoying a range of activities on the day.

Southern Rural Water along with the Wellington Shire Council, Cowwarr Lions Club, Cowwarr Landcare and Cowwarr Historical Society celebrated the re-opening of Cowwarr Weir at its "Cowwarr Weir Community Open Day".

General Manager, Water Supply, Clinton Rodda said "The day was a real success and provided us with a great opportunity to work a range of community groups to celebrate the re-opening of this fantastic recreational facility. Everyone that attended seemed to have a great time all the feedback we have received has been very positive"

"Cowwarr Weir suffered extensive damage during the Gippsland floods in June and November 2007 and was closed until it was fully repaired and safe for recreational use. The key reason for the delay in re-opening was that the full extent of the damage in the dissipater pool only became evident when it was dewatered to undertake the planned repair work. Additional work was required to repair the pool, which performs a critical function in protecting both the Weir structure and the down stream river during flood events." [Full story available here...](#)



Sow and Grow

Greening Australia are holding a Sow & Grow workshop in Leongatha on Saturday 29th November. The workshop will:

- Learn how to propagate native plants from seed, cuttings and division
- Discover how to prick out and pot up seedlings and hear what seed treatment is needed for successful germination
- Shown how to make your own mini hot-house and use it correctly

When: Saturday, 29th November - 10am - 3pm

Where: Leongatha seedbank

Cost: \$165 - all materials included

Contact: Cassie Wright at Greening Australia on ph: (03) 5662 5201 or e: cassiew@wgcm.vic.gov.au for further information or to RSVP.

Registrations close Wednesday 19th November 2008.

Rock Wallabies Spring to Life

Spring monitoring of East Gippsland's Brush-tailed Rock-wallabies began last week with a camping trip into Victoria's deepest gorge, the Snowy River Gorge in far East Gippsland.

The Brush-tailed Rock Wallaby Recovery Team had a big week, with the weather throwing everything at them from snow on the peaks, to thunderstorms and glorious sunny spring days.

DSE Biodiversity Officer, Lucy Clausen said three of four known Rock-wallabies were caught, including 'Laura' who was carrying a new month-old male pouch young.

"Laura's last offspring was taken from her in May, destined to contribute to the improvement of the genetics in the captive breeding program at Adelaide Zoo," Ms Clausen said.

That young wallaby was nick-named 'Archie' and he's apparently doing very well with his surrogate mother, in fact he's almost ready to start hopping around outside her pouch."

Ms Clausen said it was great to see 'Laura' breeding again so quickly and contributing further to the numbers of this critically endangered species.

"We were all so pleased that it was 'our' wallaby that won the DSE and VicRoads competition to be on the car registration labels for next year," Ms Clausen said. The spring monitoring will continue at two other sites later this year.



Cross Border Fire Talks

For many years, Victorian and New South Wales fire agencies have helped each other to fight bushfires.

The Victorian Department of Sustainability and Environment (DSE), the Country Fire Authority (CFA) and Rural Fire Service (RFS), along with New South Wales National Parks and Wildlife and Forests New South Wales are the agencies that make up the Eastern Border Operations Committee.

This collaborative group of agencies meets annually to plan for the forthcoming fire season and to discuss other fire management issues that affect agencies and communities in the eastern border areas of Victoria and New South Wales.

This year, the agencies are meeting in Eden on October 22 and 23 to plan how they can work together in what is shaping up to be another dry and difficult season.

Highlighting the importance of cross-border cooperation, they will be joined this year by the Chief Fire Officers: from Victoria, Ewan Waller, DSE, Geoff Conway and John Haynes, CFA and Dave Nugent, Parks Victoria; from NSW: Rob Rogers, RFS, Steve Bishop, NSW State Forests and James Lonergan, NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service.

Mr Waller said that representatives from industry, tourism and local government have been invited to meet with the Fire Chiefs to give them an overview of how the Eastern Cross Border Group works, to discuss fire issues and to answer any questions they may have in relation to preparation for and protection from bushfires in their areas. [Full story available here...](#)

WG Water Quality Data

As part of its regional water quality monitoring program,

West Gippsland Waterwatch has a large amount of current and historical water quality data relating to sites throughout the (West Gippsland) region. The data is collected by community volunteers under the WG Waterwatch data confidence framework to ensure that the data is credible, accepted and used.

Waterwatch Volunteers collect the water quality data from local rivers, creeks, coastal areas, estuaries and wetlands, then pass this data on to facilitators for recording on the subregional database.

Waterwatch data has been used for regional planning activities, including the development of the West Gippsland Regional Catchment Strategy, West Gippsland River Health Strategy, West Gippsland Water Quality Plan and the Gippsland Lakes Future Directions and Actions Plan.



The data can be accessed by contacting Tanya Cowell, facilitator for Bunurong and Corner Inlet (tanyac@wgcm.vic.gov.au), and Michelle Dickson (michelled@wgcm.vic.gov.au) River Health Team Leader at the WGCMA.

New Westernport Chairman

Local resident Tony Leonard has been appointed

Chairman of Westernport Water from October 1, 2008.

The Minister for Water Tim Holding has appointed the Cowes resident to head the regional water corporation for the next two years. Outgoing Chair, Pam Cameron said the appointment recognised the importance appointing a Chairman who lives locally.

She said: "I congratulate Mr Leonard on the appointment and am very pleased to hand over to him such a vibrant and focused organisation. "Westernport Water has its future clearly laid out in the next five-year Water Plan's continued augmentation of our system – building on the ongoing capital works we've established over the past few years for water supply and effluent treatment systems. [Full Story available here...](#)

Landcarers Team up for Award

A team effort by four Landcare groups has resulted in a major award.

The Poowong, Mount Lyall, Loch/Nyora and Triholm Landcare groups won the Community Group Caring for Private Land Award at the 2008 Port Phillip and Western Port Landcare Awards in Melbourne recently.

The award commemorated their project, the Western Port Slow the Flow Cluster which is part of the South Gippsland Landcare Network, and was won from two other outstanding nominations.

Volunteers tackled environmental and noxious weeds on roadsides and public land, protected remnant vegetation, planted trees and reduced nutrients on farms to improve water quality.

Accepting the award on behalf of the cluster, project manager Tony Gardner said: "It's great to get recognition for what we've been doing. We've got a great community with lots of passionate volunteers who are working toward complete catchment care.

The cluster has integrated nutrient management, weed management, biodiversity and riparian health and have a number of programs that work for landholders with different needs.

The awards celebrate "Landcare Heroes" and focus on the thousands of volunteers making a difference by tackling some of the big environmental issues. Actress Kerry Armstrong presented the award before 250 guests.



Tony Gardner receives the award from Kerry Armstrong

McKell Medal Nominations Open

Nominations are now open for the

2009 McKell Medal, Australia's foremost NRM honour. Entries close on November 14.

The medal is awarded annually to an individual or group whose work in NRM demonstrates what can be achieved through innovative thinking, application of research and commitment to furthering sustainable practices in the broader community. More information is available at www.daff.gov.au/

