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From the Office ...

The 2006 Report Card is almost complete and will be launched on World Environment Day - 5th June with the usual amount of flair. This year's launch will be followed by "Action in our Catchment" - a student conference - an event jointly hosted by Waterwatch and GINRF. I can still accept last minute inclusions of 'evidence' for the report card if you have any more information.

Following up from our February meeting in Wonthaggi, the Coastal Spaces Project has released its final report - see page 7 of the newsletter and DSE web site.

Also, the draft Central Sustainable Water Strategy has been released for public comment. It will have significant impact on Gippsland and the shape of the Gippsland Sustainable Water Strategy - have a look and get involved.

Hope to see you all on World Environment Day!

Carol Jeffs

Executive Officer

DATES

DATES

DATES...

Events Calendar

April & May - Gippsland Water Factory Info Sessions - see page 2

Thursday 4th & Friday 5th May - Working Together, Working Better - see www.ginrf.org.au - events

Wednesday 10th & Thursday 11th May - Community Engagement Training - see page 3

Thursday June 1st - EMS Forum - see page 4

Monday June 5th - World Environment Day

October 8th - 11th - International Landcare Conference

GINRF Dates

Thursday May 11th - GINRF Executive meeting

Monday June 5th - 4th Annual Report Card Launch



Report Card Launch & Student Conference

Monday June 5th 2006 is not only World Environment Day, but it is the date for the official launch of the 2006 Natural Resources Report Card AND the inaugural 'Action in our Catchment' Student Conference. The latest edition of the Report Card includes new natural assets, a new improved companion document and a set of 18 mini cards for the assets featured in the Report Card. The launch will be held on the morning of June 5th with a light breakfast and coffee supplied. Dr Paul Sinclair, Environment Victoria will be keynote speaker for the launch. The Student Conference will commence shortly after the launch has concluded, featuring presentations from 10 Primary Schools from across the region on projects they have conducted in partnership with agencies all over Gippsland.

Invitations will be sent out soon, but keep this date free for what will be a great celebration of world environment day.

Gippsland Water Factory Info Sessions



The Gippsland Water Factory is inviting interested stakeholders and the community to attend information sessions on the Gippsland Water Factory. These sessions follow a series of community expos held across Gippsland in late March.

The sessions will provide people with an opportunity to learn more about the project and the environmental challenges and solutions being proposed. People will also have the opportunity to ask questions directly to the project team.

A total of three sessions will be held across Gippsland at:

SALE - Wednesday, 26 April

Location: The Esso BHP Billiton Wellington Entertainment Centre, Foster Street Sale.

Time: 7:00pm - 8:30pm

TRARALGON - Thursday, 27 April

Location: Century Inn, Princes Hwy, Traralgon.

Time: 7:00pm - 8:30pm

MORWELL - Monday, 1 May

Location: The Waratah Restaurant, Princes Highway (near McDonalds), Morwell.

Time: 7:00pm - 8:30pm



For further information please telephone the Gippsland Water Factory on 1800 066 401 or visit

www.gippslandwaterfactory.com.au

Community Engagement Training

Community engagement is increasingly a 'must have' competency for anyone running projects or programs that impact the broader community, or require the involvement of many stakeholders for project success. It is integral to how government works, and is considered key to both project success and risk reduction.

The DSE Community Engagement Network has worked with a number of DSE planners to develop this innovative and interesting 2-day course. It will help planners to oversee or manage major planning strategies that require wide community involvement. The course will also explore how community engagement can effectively fit with the existing statutory planning processes.

If you have ever asked, "why do we only ever hear from the vocal minority?" then this course is for you.

Course presenters:

- Martin Butcher has extensive experience as an independent facilitator and coordinates community engagement learning in DSE.
- Kate Henderson is a community engagement facilitator with DSE and specialises in coaching and designing community engagement processes

Course: Community Engagement Planning; A course for Planners

Venue: Central Springs Motor Inn, Cnr Howe and Camp Streets Daylesford

Dates: May 10th and 11th, 2006

Starts: 9.30am (May 10th) **Finishes:** 4pm (May 11th)

Cost: Two-day course cost

- DSE personnel: \$350 (Excludes GST)
- Other agencies: \$500 (Excludes GST)

Course Inclusions: Overnight accommodation, and all meals, course materials and the acclaimed publication: 'Effective Engagement: Building Relationships with Community and other Stakeholders'.

For bookings contact: Laura Window at laura.window@dse.vic.gov.au

For further information contact: Jodi Sneddon (03) 9296 4742 or jodi.sneddon@dse.vic.gov.au



"“Sometimes you can't see yourself clearly until you see yourself through the eyes of others.”"

Ellen DeGeneres

EMS Forum

Latrobe Convention Centre, Traralgon Thursday June 1st 10.00-4.00pm

Explore and celebrate the approaches being used in Gippsland to drive sustainable farming practice through the implementation of EMS.

Your hosts for the day- renowned industry leaders Bruce Standfield, Fish Creek Dairy Farmer & Bill Bray, Walkerville sheep & beef producer will be joined by key-note speakers Ken Garner from the Bega Cheese Pilot EMS project and Todd Harper, Director of the QUIT program. The Program Includes:

- Why and how communities and industry need to work together in catchments to improve best management practice.
- Approaches taken by the community through organizations such as Landcare.
- Approaches taken by the dairy, beef and sheep industries.
- Farmers from South, East and West Gippsland give their perspective on why they have developed an EMS and what value it will add to their farming business in the future.
- Celebrate the achievements of landholders who have recently participated in EMS programs.
- Opportunities to participate in round table discussions and share views with others involved or keen to get involved!

Bookings are essential, so please contact: Jenny O.Sullivan, osulliva@dcsi.net.au; Marguerite White (GippsLandcare) 5662 4555 or margueritew@wgcm.vic.gov.au; Julie Williams julie.williams@dpi.vic.gov.au or; Joan Wallis 5662 9900 or joan.wallis@dpi.vic.gov.au

Landholders, developers and the environment will benefit from a **BushBroker Scheme** more flexible system of native vegetation protection following the recent announcement of a new approach to native vegetation management and the start of the new BushBroker scheme.

Acting Regional Director for the Department of Sustainability and Environment (DSE) in Gippsland, David Tainsh said that BushBroker, a market-driven system to trade native vegetation credits was a great opportunity for landholders and developers.

Mr. Tainsh said that the new approach to native vegetation management as a whole would reduce red tape and deliver greater long-term environmental benefits.

A key feature of the new approach is identifying high value native vegetation early in the planning process, so that these sites are kept intact when designating future urban growth areas. Precinct plans, a similar concept to property vegetation plans but effective over larger areas, can assist in native vegetation management in development areas.



Landholders wanting to submit an Expression of Interest to establish native vegetation credits on their property, or developers interested in the availability of native vegetation credits should contact the Department of Sustainability and Environment on 136 186 or visit

www.dse.vic.gov.au/native_vegetation

National Water Commission Guidelines

The Water Smart Australia guidelines and irrigation guidelines are now available at the website: http://nwc.gov.au/water_fund/water_smart_aust.cfm along with information on the four newly announced NSW projects at http://nwc.gov.au/water_fund/approved_projects.cfm

About Water Smart:

The Australian Government's Water Smart Australia Program aims to accelerate the development and up-take of smart technologies and practices in water use across Australia.

The \$1.6 billion Program has funding over five years until 2010. It is targeted at large-scale projects. As a general guide, the minimum level of funding available through the program for a project is \$1 million, and the maximum funding duration is four years.

Projects that are eligible for funding under the program include those that will:

- improve river flows for better environmental outcomes
- return groundwater aquifers to sustainable levels
- lead to water savings through improvements in irrigation infrastructure
- encourage or advance efficiency improvements in on-farm water use
- desalinate water for use in cities and towns
- recycle and reuse storm water, 'grey' water and waste water from sewage
- provide more efficient storage facilities, such as underground aquifers
- provide alternatives to ocean outfalls and the better management of sewage in our coastal cities, or
- develop water efficient housing design

Waterwatch Winners

Both East and West Gippsland Waterwatch have recently received awards for their outstanding work in our region. East Gippsland Waterwatch Regional Coordinator Becky Van Der Heyden and EGCSMA's Russell Broomhall proudly accepted the **Victorian Coastal Award for Excellence in the Community Education category**, for the Gippsland Lakes relay and the West Gippsland Waterwatch Nooramunga Corner Inlet Volunteer Monitoring Project has won the **ExxonMobil Volunteer Involvement Program Award!**

We would like to extend a big congratulations to both Waterwatch teams and their volunteers. Well done guys!



Trafalgar Primary School participating in the Gippsland Lakes Relay



Native Vegetation Partners

Gippsland's landholders, developers and environment are set to benefit from a more flexible system of native vegetation management.

In Gippsland, Native Vegetation staff from DSE are working closely with local government to help landholders better understand the new approach and take advantage of the opportunities it offers.

Debbie Shaw was appointed by Gippsland DSE earlier this year to work specifically with local government to clarify the new legislation, help council staff understand and implement the new approach, and to support local government in the administration of Victoria's Native Vegetation Management Framework.

Key aspects of Debbie's work with local government are to facilitate the delivery of specialist training to council staff and promote the State Government's new BushBroker scheme, a program to trade native vegetation credits.

In Wellington Shire, Debbie will be working with Environmental Planner Penny Neumann, who said that the new approach to native vegetation management will help make compliance with the regulations easier for landholders and developers.

"Working with Debbie will ensure greater consistency between council staff and DSE and will help all of us to assist our communities to better understand and take advantage of the Government's new approach to native vegetation," Ms Neumann said.

Additional information on BushBroker and other landholder incentive schemes is now available on the new DSE Native Vegetation website, which also details the new 'whole of landscape approach' to native vegetation management. www.dse.vic.gov.au/nativevegetation

Threatened Species Funding

Round 9 of the Threatened Species Network Community Grants program is now open.

The grants provide funding for community organisations to conduct on-ground work for the ongoing health of our natural environment, specifically targeting the needs of nationally threatened species and ecological communities. Activities include habitat restoration, weeding, feral animal control, population surveys and monitoring, fencing, and fire management.

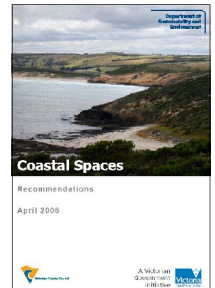
Copies of the Program Guidelines, Application Form and Guide to Completing an Application may be obtained from <http://www.wwf.org.au> or phone the Program Officer Grants on 1800-032-551; or contact the Threatened Species Network Coordinator for your region.

Original signed applications must be submitted by mail. Closing date for applications is 5pm Friday, 2 June 2006.



Coastal Spaces Initiative

The Minister for Planning and the Minister for Environment released the Coastal Spaces Recommendations Report on 17 April 2006. The Recommendations Report responds to the emerging issues identified in the Inception Report. It outlines a series of recommendations and associated actions designed to achieve improved outcomes for coastal Victoria.



Coastal Spaces aims to:

- Improve and clarify strategic planning for sustainable development in coastal Victoria
- Improve the application of planning and environment tools in coastal areas and develop new tools as appropriate
- Build the capacity of local government and others to apply Government policy for the Coast.

To obtain a copy of this report please visit www.dse.vic.gov.au and follow the links in 'Coasts & Marine.'

Draft Central Region Sustainable Water Strategy

Greater use of recycled water and freeing up drinking water as a result of the Gippsland Water Factory lead proposals to secure West Gippsland's water supplies.

...Impacts on Gippsland

The proposals, along with a 10,000 megalitre environmental flow allocation for the Latrobe River, are outlined in the draft Central Region Sustainable Water Strategy, released earlier this month.

The strategy aims to secure water supplies for homes, businesses, industry, farms and the environment for the next 50 years.

Mr Thwaites said West Gippsland faced a water shortfall of 4000 megalitres by 2030 and 16,000 megalitres by 2055.

The strategy proposed substituting 3000 megalitres of recycled water from the Gippsland Water Factory and possibly in the longer term, 9000 megalitres from the Eastern Water Recycling Proposal.

In addition, up to 21,000 megalitres of water, previously held by the State Electricity Commission of Victoria, is available for possible future power generation.

Mr Thwaites said the proposals did not include assessing the needs of the area's power generating companies which have entitlements to take water from the Latrobe River.

He said the power generating industry was expected to meet changes to its water needs by water conservation and use of recycled water.

Mr Thwaites said the draft strategy was open for a two-month period of public comment.

A copy of the draft strategy is available by contacting the Department of Sustainability & Environment on 136 186 or visiting www.dse.vic.gov.au

Do You Have a Creative Streak?

Do you fancy yourself as the creative type? Can you capture the essence of the Gippsland Lakes in a logo?

If so the Friends of the Gippsland Lakes, Parks and Reserves (FOGL) want you to help them design their logo and be in the running for some fantastic prizes. The winning entry, as judged by the FOGL panel, will be the design that best captures the essence of the Gippsland Lakes and the spirit of FOGL.

FOGL President David Ellard said that of all the tasks facing the new group designing a logo has been one of the most difficult.

"The logo must represent those things that make the Gippsland Lakes such a special place as well as the aims of the group, whilst being instantly recognisable," David said.

"Although we put a great deal of effort into working on the design, we simply could not come up with anything that made us think 'that is the one', so we need some help from the community."

Prizes are being offered in many categories including \$400 cash plus \$150 worth of goods from Tambo Vale Nursery & Gardens for the winning entrant.

The competition is sponsored by DSE's Coast Action/Coastcare program with support from Tambo Vale Nursery and Gardens, Bairnsdale Outdoor and Camping, Karls Megaspots, The Director Boat Charters, Just Books Lakes Entrance and Dahlsens Mitre 10.

All entries must reflect the aims and aspirations of FOGL so to give yourself the best chance of winning visit their website www.fogl.org.au

DSE Bulletins

The Spatial Analysis and Research Branch of DSE released a range of bulletins in March. These publications are now available from the DSE website, just follow the link below:

- Research Matters is a quarterly bulletin with news of the latest research and publications from the Spatial Analysis and Research Branch;
- The Victorian Population Bulletin 2006 provides a valuable snapshot of population change and the basic drivers behind that change;
- Interstate Migration at a glance looks at the latest trends in migration within Australia.

Web Address: www.dse.vic.gov.au/research/urbanandregional - click on 'Research Matters' or 'Demographics' for Interstate Migration at a glance and the Victorian Population Bulletin.