

# Woodlands and Wildlife

## Newsletter of the Mid Goulburn Broken Implementation Committee

December 2005

Vol.5. Number 2

### Snapshots

Twenty five Ecological Vegetation Class (EVC) information sheets have been developed to provide information to stakeholders involved with the management of the catchments vegetation.

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Nine schools from the Goulburn Broken catchment were sponsored to the International River Health Conference in Mildura this year, including Sacred Heart College Yarrawonga and Yarrawonga Secondary College. Students wholeheartedly threw themselves into the program and had a truly enjoyable experience learning from other students about water health programs in their regions.

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**A Wildlife Guide for Landholders**  
in the plains and ironbark regions of the Goulburn Broken catchment.

NOW AVAILABLE  
Ph 5761 1691

### Mokoan discussions continue

A Community information session was held in November to allow interested parties to look at and discuss the latest options identified as possible land uses on the present Lake Mokoan site.

The consultants, Beca, and Arup Consulting, were appointed to look at options for future use of the site presently occupied by the lake, after decommissioning.

The Lake Mokoan Future land Use Steering Committee (LMFLUSC) has worked closely with the consultants, Agency representatives and the community to ensure that the most appropriate options are being put forward to achieve the best possible outcome for local adjacent landowners and the community at large.

Preliminary land use options have been prepared. In developing the preliminary land use options, all of the opportunities for use and development of the primary study area suggested by the community during Stage One have been evaluated to determine whether a detailed assessment in this stage of the study is warranted.

The LMFLUS recognises that the restoration of a wetland complex is the core precinct around which other land use options are to be developed and assessed. The size and scale of the wetland, woodland and grassland components and the areas of the primary study area that are to be included in the wetland complex are yet to be finally decided. The decision on these matters will be made predominantly on ecological and biodiversity considerations and community response.

Land use concepts have been prepared to assist with the development of preliminary land use options. The land use concepts include a mixture of elements and illustrate differing treatment of land uses, including tourism and recreation, agriculture, agri-forestry and open space. Five land use concepts have been identified including:  
**Concept 1: Enhanced Wetland Core.**  
**Concept 2: Agriculture.**  
**Concept 3: Tourism and Recreation.**  
**Concept 4: Community and Social.**  
**Concept 5: Agri-forestry** ....p2

### Allison Moves to the CMA Mid catchment

Allison Long has been appointed to the newly created position of Community Programs Coordinator working out of the CMA office in Sydney Road Benalla.

Allison was previously Landcare Facilitator in the Mid Goulburn Broken catchment with a great deal of success in engaging landholders, primary industry and schools.

With experience in the cattle industry as Secretary of the Australian Braunvieh Association, a representative of StudBeef Victoria and a member of YoungBeef, Allison comes to the Mid with a good deal of experience under her belt.

Dryland Community Liaison Officer, Poppe Davis, is returning full time to the upper Goulburn catchment office in Yea.



Allison Long

### Reminder

Your newsletter is now available in PDF format so all members of your group or organisation can receive it in colour.

Contact [popped@gbcma.vic.gov.au](mailto:popped@gbcma.vic.gov.au)

### From the Executive Officers Desk



First of all, I hope you have had a healthy and fruitful year and wish you and your families all the best for 2006.

The big ticket item for our Implementation Committee this year has been the decommissioning of Lake Mokoan. Sally Simson, Chair of our Implementation Committee has also been the Chair of the Lake Mokoan Future Land Use Steering Committee and I have provided executive support to the committee.

The Lake Mokoan site is nearly 9000 hectares of which approximately 3000 hectares will return to the original wetlands. What happens to the rest of the land is very complex and, of course, very controversial. At this stage of the process we have taken a matrix of options to the public in the form of 2 community information sessions. They have been extremely well attended and have provided terrific feedback to our committee. We will refine the options to 2 or 3 and again come back to the community in early 2006. Our aim is to have a final option to take to the Minister for the Environment in May next year.

Next year will see the introduction of a new extension system in the Mid Goulburn Broken area. At the moment we have various extension officers delivering different grants with another set of people supporting Landcare. In a much more "client" orientated approach, one extension person will be allocated a smaller area to provide a whole farm plan with aerial photographs, deliver environmental management grants and waterway grants and support the Landcare group in his or her allotted area. This will be introduced at the start of July.

The Mid Goulburn Broken Implementation Committee now oversees over \$6million in natural resource management works in our area. We are constantly making changes to be more representative of our community. Please ring me on 57611673 if you have any ideas as to how we can have better interaction with our community.

All the best to you all for Christmas.

*Phil Stevenson*

## Community Grants change direction

**The Community Salinity Grants (CSG) program will undergo a change in direction as a result of a recent program evaluation.**

The program has run since 1996 to provide funding for small salinity education projects and has been run by the Community Education Officers in each of the three Implementation Committee regions, with support from the Goulburn Broken CMA and Department of Primary Industry.

Changes to the current program are based solely on availability of resources and will place responsibility for allocation of funding and updating guidelines with the three Implementation Committees.

CSG's have been seen as an excellent way to spread the salinity message in an educational

format to landholders and students throughout the Goulburn Broken catchment. Applications have also been successful in areas that are not considered salinity prone, as it is vital for people at the top of the catchment to understand the importance of protecting vegetation for water quality downstream.

In the recent round of CSG allocations only \$2,800 was allocated in the Mid Goulburn Broken catchment indicating a decrease in the number of applications.

The final funding announcements will be made in December, after they have been ratified by the Goulburn Broken CMA Board.

## Lake MOKOAN Progress continues from p1

The primary study area has been divided into precincts based on characteristics and location. The precincts, which are shown in Figure 1 (map attached), include:

**Precinct A: Wetland Core.** Currently defined on the basis of land that is subject to a 1 in 5 year flood event and includes those areas occupied by the Winton Swamp wetland complex prior to the creation of Lake Mokoan. Precinct A includes approximately 4,200 hectares.

**Precinct B: The Spit** – an area of high geomorphological and archaeological significance. Precinct B includes approximately 250 hectares.

**Precinct C: Creeks and Drainage Lines.** Incorporates the creeks and drainage lines that feed the wetland core and some areas of ecological significance, including several box woodland areas. May be suitable for alternative uses subject to appropriate protection of these environmental values.

Precinct C includes approximately 900 ha.

**Precinct D: Wetland Fringe.** Includes areas of ecological significance and/or are sensitively located adjacent to the wetland core. May be suitable for alternative uses subject to appropriate protection of these environmental values. Precinct D includes approximately 900 hectares.

**Precinct E: South-western Dryland Area.** Incorporates land generally considered more suitable for a range of alternative uses as it is generally considered less constrained by environmental considerations than Precincts C and D. Precinct E includes approximately 1,400 hectares.

**Precinct F: Eastern Dryland Area.** As for Precinct E. Precinct F includes approximately 150 hectares.

**Precinct G: Northern Dryland area.** The narrow strip of land north of the core wetland area has some important environmental values. It includes some public facilities and generally has good public access. Precinct G includes approximately 300 hectares. The boundaries of these precincts are indicative and may change following further detailed assessment. Only public land is included in the precincts and the land areas provided are only approximates..

For a copy of the complete information bulletin No 3, please contact Phil Stevenson on 5761 1673 or go to the Lake Mokoan website [www.lakemokoan.com](http://www.lakemokoan.com)

**A map of the proposed future uses is attached to the back of this newsletter and also available on the web.**

**Your newsletter is available in PDF format from the GBCMA website [www.gbcma.vic.gov.au](http://www.gbcma.vic.gov.au) or emailing [popped@gbcma.vic.gov.au](mailto:popped@gbcma.vic.gov.au)**

# Premier opens new CMA building

The Victorian Premier, Steve Bracks officially opened the new Goulburn Broken CMA building in Shepparton on November 4th.

Visitors from throughout the catchment attended the event which included a 'welcome to country' by indigenous elder Francis Mathieson, assisted by Jade Miller, of the Yorta Yorta people and a wonderful presentation on the didgeridoo by Graeme Briggs.

After the official opening Mr Bracks assisted students from St Georges Road Primary School to plant some trees and grasses to promote the new River Connect project—aimed at encouraging the community to rediscover the river and surrounding areas.

"I think it is an example of the community

taking responsibility for river improvement," Mr Bracks said.

"And it's about partnerships with other organisations which will really make a difference to river health in the future."

[Quote—Shepparton News]



The Premier Steve Bracks addresses guests.



The evocative didgeridoo.

## Managing WEEDS on public land

About eighty participants, representing sixteen organisations, converged on Wangaratta Airport recently, for the inaugural Regional Forum on weed management, as part of the Tackling Weeds on Private Land (TWoPL) initiative.

The first in a series planned for regional areas across the state over spring and summer, the forum provided opportunities for participants to highlight their contributions to weed management, discuss implementation issues and to establish contacts for future collaboration.

Participants commented on the value of being able to compare their work with the work of others in similar projects and enhance what is already happening on-ground. A follow up evaluation of the forum will identify its effect in influencing ongoing collaboration and partnerships.

Demonstrations of vehicle/machinery field wash down units used to prevent the spread

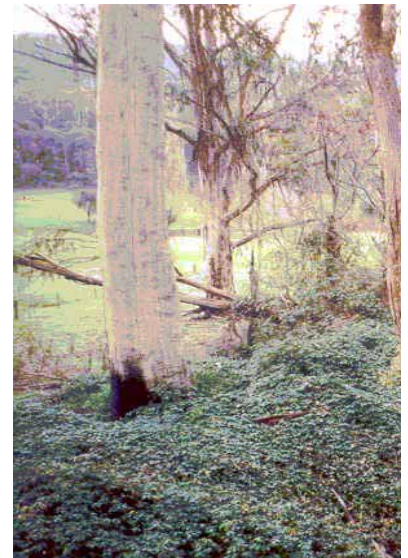
of weeds attracted considerable interest during the afternoon session. Powercor and DPI presenters showed how vehicle and machinery hygiene wash downs could be integrated efficiently into the field operations of various industries.

More recently the Department of Sustainability and Environment has announced an opportunity for community groups and landholders to participate in identifying sites where blackberry rust fungus might be used to biologically control this insidious weed.

The focus will be in public land as part of a state-wide program to control blackberry infestations on public land.

The project will be taken out to the community by Parks Victoria to encourage locals to take part in this initiative.

See advertisement on next page.....



## Aerial baiting trials for wild dogs

The first stage of an aerial baiting program will begin in December according to Environment Minister John Thwaites. Mr Thwaites says that the program will start with non toxic baits, deployed from the air, and a follow up monitoring exercise to determine the uptake with a view to protecting non target species like the Spotted-tailed quoll.

An estimated 3600 sheep and lambs are taken every year by wild dogs. The program targeting North east Victoria will attempt to reduce the number of feral canines.

## Changes to regional PP&A

The latest and best summary of what is happening with the Pest Plant & Animal division at the Dept of Primary Industry (DPI) has come from a recent story in the South West Goulburn Newsletter, written by Peter Mitchell.

Peter has attended several briefings and has reached a pragmatic conclusion that summarises the current situation very well indeed.

Ideally we know that there are changes in staffing levels in the PP&A division and that catchment officers (CMOs) will be based at Seymour, Broadford, Mansfield, Alexandra, Benalla and Echuca.

It is unlikely that these staff will work solely in their area and most likely that they will have state, regional and local roles. With reduced resources, the Department will focus attention on preventing weed establishment rather than treating problems that have already established.

Patersons Curse has become a lower priority than in the past due to its persistent spread and there is little hope of eradication within the current technology.

However DPI will continue to provide 1080 through all locations and rabbit free assessments will be carried out. Compliance programs will be run locally with follow up by DPI staff throughout Victoria to ensure that orders are being carried out for weed and pest animal control.

Responsibility for weed and pest animal control sits fairly and squarely with the landholder and in recent years we have seen a decrease in the level of funding allocated to this area.

It is anticipated that staffing levels for PP&A will soon be announced. Until then landholders should continue to do all they can to control weeds and pest animals on their properties.

## Communications in focus



A communications forum was held recently in Yea, to focus attention on meaningful ways to engage regional communities.

Presenters Lisa McKenzie (Impress Publicity), Poppe Davis (CMA) and Katie Brown (CMA) showed examples of best design for promotional materials and advised on layout and positioning for material to be used in the press.

The presenters also advised on some basic rules for designing material, including text, images and main message. Copyright and plagiarism were also covered.

Notes from the forum are available from Katie Brown on Ph 5797 2001.

## Desperately Seeking Seed Harvesters

The Regent Honeyeater Project is seeking assistance throughout the Summer months for collection and propagation of indigenous seed.

Seed harvesting starts in December and into the new year but the group will need some help with seed sowing in December as well, for potting up in term 1 2006.

People who have previously been involved in the program are urged to try their hand at a few different activities.

Because the seed crop is unpredictable from year to year the group takes sufficient supplies to carry the project through lean years.

Seed pods from local species of trees, wattles, peas, daisies, lilies and several other rare plants are to be collected and stored for future use.

Seed sowing needs to be done before Christmas so interested parties should contact Ray Thomas, Project Coordinator, on 5761 1515 or email Ray at [raydavidthomas@hotmail.com](mailto:raydavidthomas@hotmail.com) to register your availability.

If you can give some time to this important

What is the flowering cycle of a native plant?  
Do I need a permit to collect native seed?

Learn about native seed collection—answer these questions and many more at the

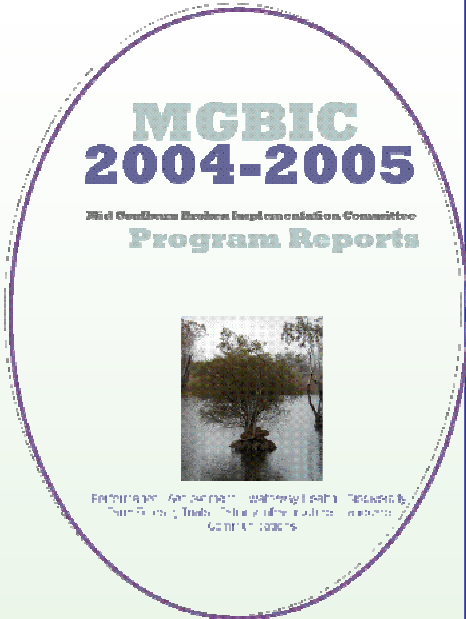
### Indigenous Seed Collection Workshop

Wednesday 14th December  
10am GBCMA office  
5/10 High St, Yea  
Saturday 17th December  
10am DSE Office  
Highett St, Mansfield.



Contact Geoff Boyse  
Ph 5779 1324  
0429 166 775

MGBIC Annual Report 2004-2005 available now in hard copy and disk.



Contact Debra on 5761 1691 or look on [www.gbcma.vic.gov.au](http://www.gbcma.vic.gov.au) to download your copy

The GBCMA website is under constant renewal and revision.

Use our site to link with other environmental sites and Landcare Groups.

Goulburn Broken CMA at



[www.gbcma.vic.gov.au](http://www.gbcma.vic.gov.au)

## International River Health Conference

The Goulburn Broken CMA sponsored 9 selected schools from across the catchment to participate in this years International River Health Conference, held at Mildura in October .

The conference was a huge success with two upper Goulburn Schools creating environmental presentations for the benefit and enjoyment of other delegates.

St Patricks Primary School, Seymour, produced an interactive presentation to highlight their water monitoring program in the Kilmore rea. Their findings were very interesting and noted the various different elements of ground water, its appearance and behaviour.

Merrijig and Jamieson Primary Schools teamed up to produce a main stage production using giant puppets which took the conference by storm. Depicting a tree, a parrot and a fish, students delighted delegates with their environmental story.

One adult said she had not seen anything like it since the Sydney Olympics!

Most of the students stayed at the Grand Hotel, which was a real hit with the youngsters. They were able to cool off in the pool before going to dinner and the evening sessions.

Schools sponsored from the MBG catchment were Yarrawonga Secondary College and Sacred Heart Yarrawonga.



*The Goulburn Broken sponsored group was a credit to the catchment.*

### Brolgas alive and well in Yarrawonga

The O'Kane family property on Katamatite Road has been the preferred home for this pair of love birds for around 10 years, and although they have had great breeding success their chicks are constantly predated by foxes.

26ha will be fenced to preclude foxes from the property under the Broken Boosey Conservation Management Network program, providing the Brolgas a free range area where they can teach their chicks the necessary survival skills.

A sign will be erected on the Katamatite Road providing information about the birds and their ecology.



## Snapshots from near and far

Previous Regional Landcare Coordinator, Heather Holder, is in Siberia (Russia) teaching English to students and businessmen. Heather has been keeping up a steady diary of events since her arrival, including some side splitting revelations of settling into Russian life with winter approaching.

Heather:

*"I have now purchased my winter coat (пальто / pal'to) and gloves (перчатка / perchatka). I had been down to the markets before and had a look at coats and gloves but it was all really confusing – well I thought so having never been shopping for something that was going to keep me warm at -40°C. A lot of the coats I saw at the markets I saw women wearing them now, so then I wasn't sure if they were winter (зима / zima) coats or autumn (осень / osen') coats. Anyway Ira helped me to purchase exactly what I needed for winter."*

Heather has recently been moved back into her freshly renovated flat, which when she arrived had some serious plumbing problems. Too many to mention here but her description was entertaining.  
....Ed.

## Landcare Briefs

This year there are 145 Expressions of Interest for environmental funding under review by the technical panel and they will be assessed before Christmas.

The GBCMA hopes to have the draft single bid prepared for consideration by 20th January 2006.

For information contact Katie Brown  
Ph 5797 2001

For further Landcare information contact:

Andrea Montgomery  
Ph 0427 349 725

Allison Long  
Ph 0418 140 704

Trevor Verlin  
Ph 0439 040 599

## EXPRESSION OF INTEREST BLACKBERRY CONTROL ON PUBLIC LAND

The Department of Sustainability and Environment has launched an initiative to utilise the blackberry rust fungus as a biological control for blackberries on public land.

Expressions of interest are now being sought to identify suitable release sites and the EOI process closes on

**December 16th 2005.**

Please contact Katie Brown Ph 5797 2001  
for an expression of interest form.

## Balanced Productive Soils Project—Allison Long

A group of Mid Goulburn farmers have currently completed the first year of their National Landcare Program funded project. This project included demonstration sites which will provide significant information regarding the critical balances of soil nutrients.

Four representative sites have been selected across the Mid Goulburn (Longwood, Violet Town, Mollyulah and Burnt Creek), and initial soil tests and treatments have been recently conducted and prepared for analysis and presented at the recent field days.

The four field days held on-site at each paddock were a huge success and extremely well attended. Cathy Botta, Melbourne University and Nathan Heath, Department of Primary Industries were the key note speakers demonstrating both practical and theoretical learning objectives in line with the project aims; -creating the awareness and the significance of acidic and other imbalanced agricultural soils and the chemical imbalances involved.

-demonstrating the wide variations and health of the Mid Goulburn/Broken region's North East Victorian soils.

-creating the awareness of the need for critical soil nutrients to be available in the correct balance for healthy and sustainable plant production.

-demonstrating the step by step processes required by landholders to correct the deficiencies involved



John McCracken - at the demonstration site

### ***New Broken River Website focuses on River Health***

See the new site at [www.thebrokenriver.com.au](http://www.thebrokenriver.com.au)

## Minister declares Noxious Weeds

Environment Minister John Thwaites recently announced the declaration of twelve noxious weeds.

Twelve nationally recognised Weeds of National Significance (WONS) species have been declared in Victoria as restricted weeds, meaning they can no longer be sold or traded within Victoria.

20 species are recognised nationally as WONS - weeds that cause significant production or environmental damage within Australia.

"Victoria took a lead role in establishing the WONS list, and we've been working hard to have these weeds assessed and declared under Victorian legislation as part of a comprehensive review of our noxious weeds list," Mr Thwaites said.

"All 20 WONS, with the exception of some willow species, are now declared noxious weeds within Victoria. The excepted willow species will also be assessed and considered for declaration as a component of the state-wide review of noxious weeds. These assessments will assist in

developing strategies for willow management across the State"

The decision to declare these species noxious weeds was based on their invasiveness, potential for spread and impacts on environmental, economic and social values. Michael Gainger, Chief Executive Officer of the Nursery and Garden Industry Victoria welcomed the declaration of the twelve new weeds:

"We have been working actively with our members to voluntarily remove 57 plant species from sale, including all WONS species. NGIV is committed to proactively preventing the spread of plants that have adverse impacts on environmental, economic and social values." Mr Gainger said.

*(From Ministers Press statement....Ed.)*

Please see the list at the end of this newsletter or call DSE Customer Service on 136 186 for further information

## WOODLANDS AND WILDLIFE

Published for the Mid Goulburn Broken Implementation Committee

by  
Poppe Davis  
Ph: 5761 1540

### Paddock

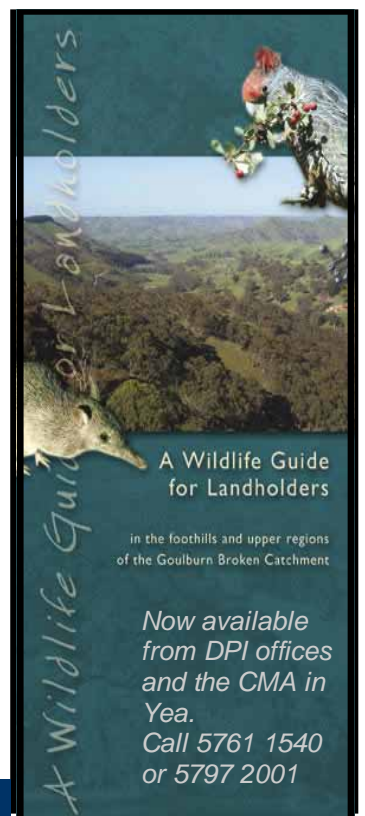


### TREES

*Information brochure available on saving the grand sentinels of farm paddocks across the country.*

*Paddock trees are disappearing fast due to clearing for subdivision and natural attrition.*

*For your information brochure please contact the CMA on 5761 1540*



# Lake MOKOAN

Figure 1. Precinct map and preliminary land use options

