

Upper Goulburn Muster

The Newsletter of the Upper Goulburn Implementation Committee

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Climate Change Forum came to Mansfield

The Upper Goulburn Climate Change Forum in Mansfield was well supported with over 130 delegates in attendance.

An initiative of the Upper Goulburn Implementation Committee (UGIC), the forum aimed to present a diverse and balanced view of the possible outcomes of climate change in the upper Goulburn catchment.

The film 'An Inconvenient Truth' was shown in the morning to set the scene for the four expert presenters who delivered excellent presentations on global warming and its likely effects.

The highly credentialed speakers, two with books on climate change already in print, included farmer and orchardist John Pettigrew, an Al Gore ambassador; cold



L to R: John Pettigrew, Dr Barrie Pittock, Dr Brian Lloyd, Dr Henrik Wahren.

climate ecologist Dr Henrik Wahren, retired CSIRO climatologist Dr Barrie Pittock and Engineer and commentator on social change Dr Brian Lloyd.

John Pettigrew followed the film with an overview on global climate change and how potential changes in our region might affect farming. Mr Pettigrew focussed on the need to set emission reduction targets, mandatory vehicle efficiency and renewable energy. As a farmer and member of the Victorian Farmers Federation he is in a prime position to understand what challenges the rural sector is facing and how it might meet those challenges.

Dr Barrie Pittock, CSIRO Honorary Fellow and one of the world's leading climate researchers, is another expert arguing that we need to argue less, and act quickly to avoid increasingly severe climate change. His recent book *Climate Change: Turning up the Heat*, looks at the controversy around global warming and other predicted changes.

Dr Pittock showed scientific climatic evidence that supports his apprehension and he believes our society has been caught unawares in believing we had 50 to 100 years before warming became critical, but it is accelerating at an alarming rate.

Discomfort with the engineering fraternity's attitude to sustainable development, and concern for his grandchildren's future, prompted Dr Brian Lloyd to research material for production of his book *Climate Change and Global Warming*, in which he seeks answers to how we will demand and supply energy in the future.

Dr Lloyd affirmed his concerns with a quote from American baseball player Yogi Berra, who quipped "The future ain't what it used to be".

Go to p2.



The famous "Earth from Space" photo, taken in the early 1990's.

CONGRATULATIONS The Glenaroua Land Management Group has successfully applied for funding from Nestle Community Environment Program to build a Landcare resources trailer, which will be made available to other groups. Information from Paul Fleming at Glenaroua Land Management Group Ph 5784 3028.

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2007 the year for AWARDS

Landcare, community engagement and recognition of Landcare Group activities were the focus of the 2007 UGIC community awards.

In honour of celebrations marking 10 year of CMA's in Victoria, the UGIC awarded the Merton Landcare Group for a DVD on its' history and major projects story. For award details and photos go to page 3.

Nominations for the 2008 Awards will be called in April.

THE UPPER GOULBURN MUSTER

IS PREPARED FOR THE UPPER GOULBURN IMPLEMENTATION COMMITTEE.

EDITOR: POPPE M DAVIS

PHONE ; 5736 0108

SHOP 5, 10 HIGH STREET, YEA 3717

Email: popped@gbcma.vic.gov.au

Website: www.gbcma.vic.gov.au



Surface meltwater in Greenland, descending to bedrock.

(Photo courtesy of R Braithwaite and J Zwally, via Jim Hansen, see Scientific American, 290, 68-77 (2004) With thanks to Dr B Pittock.)

Climate Change continued from p1.

Cold climate regions provide a trigger for global warming as shown by Merrijig resident Dr Henrik Wahren. At an altitude of around 2000 metres the Australian Alps are extremely vulnerable to changes in temperature and will be severely affected by any rise in temperature. In fact a rise of less than 3°C will take the snow line above the alpine life zone, severely compromising the ecology of the Australian Alps.

Almost 3% of terrestrial land is covered by true alpine vegetation—unique species and plant communities.

Dr Wahren said that with rises in

temperature we can expect reduced duration and depth of snow cover, loss of ability to store bulk water, loss of insulation for plants and small animals, plus a longer and dryer growing season for alpine vegetation.

As the snow line recedes we will see loss of plant species and an increase in invasive species like warmer climate plants, insects and mammals.

Dr Wahren firmly stated, "This is serious", and the message from all presenters is that we only have one chance to protect our planet and the time to act is now.

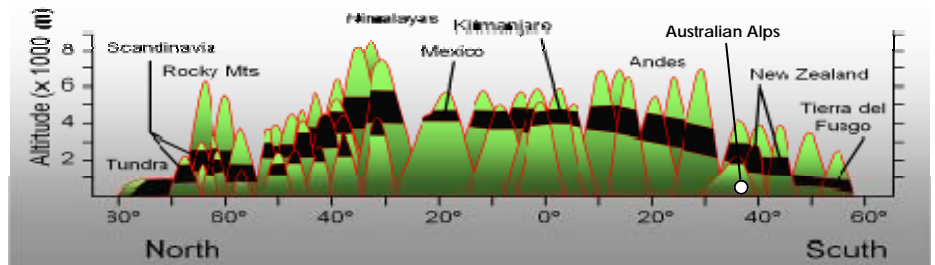


Diagram courtesy Professor Christian Koerner, University of Basel.

Perch in Peril - Fern Haymes

A Freshwater Fish Circus was held at the Moore's Rd Reserve in Strath Creek on Sunday 10 February to draw attention to fresh water species in the King Parrot Creek..

The Macquarie perch is a nationally endangered freshwater fish. In Victoria, it was once found throughout the cooler, upper reaches of the Murray-Darling system, but is now limited to just a handful of populations. Fish researchers for the Arthur Rylah Institute (Department of Sustainability and Environment) have been monitoring these populations annually and a survey last October on the King Parrot Creek made alarm bells ring.

The King Parrot Creek survey yielded a 94% reduction in catch of Macquarie perch. Whilst acknowledging that there is a possibility of some fish retreating to the Goulburn River, it is clear that this population is in serious trouble. A major impact on native fish in creeks such as King Parrot Creek is the loss of flows over summer. The 30 year average annual flow for King Parrot Creek is about 15 GL. For the past 5 years however, annual flows have been just 1.5 - 4.5 GL. Last summer flows in King Parrot

Creek ceased altogether, and the creek retreated to a series of pools. Fish seeking refuge in these pools were very vulnerable, especially when levels dropped dramatically, temperatures rose, and dissolved oxygen dropped. We are in a better position than this time last year, but we still expect another very difficult summer for the Maccas and other resident fish.

A recent meeting between relevant Agencies discussed the situation and considered ways to support the Maccas of King Parrot Creek. A range of actions are now being considered. It was also recognised that there are 276 Stock & Domestic water users on the creek, as well as other frontage users. People who live along King Parrot Creek, who share its values and who recognise that they have a very special and threatened species in their midst, are perhaps in the best position to really make a difference to the Maccas this summer. Landholders who reduce their water extraction from the creek can be

justifiably proud of their role in supporting one of Australia's threatened fish. Easy ways to reduce water use include using greywater and recycled water whenever possible and mulching gardens to reduce watering. Green lawns in summer are really a thing of the past, and if you have an ornamental pond, lake, dam or pool please don't top it up. And remember that other elements of habitat are critically important for Macquarie perch; debris and snags in creeks, overhanging and fringing native vegetation are vital.

Macquarie perch (*Macquaria australasica*) are dark grey or bluish grey, with a rounded tail and distinctive large, white eyes. They can range up to 3.5 kg but most fish are around 1kg.

Recreational fishing of Macquarie perch is prohibited in all waters of Victoria except Lake Dartmouth, the Yarra River and the Upper Coliban Reservoir and their tributaries.



For further information contact Bridget Clarke on

Ph 5736 0105.

UGIC focuses on Recognition

Recognition for community work is extremely high on the Implementation Committee agenda.

The Upper Goulburn Implementation Committee (UGIC) presented three awards in 2007 to celebrate the contribution made by volunteers in the upper Goulburn catchment.

The Landcare Award for Excellence, now in its 7th year, was awarded to Merton resident John Fraser for his dedication and long service to the Merton Landcare Group Committee.

The Hubert Miller Perpetual Trophy was awarded to Janet Hagen for her untiring efforts in community engagement, as facilitator for the Hughes Creek Catchment Collaborative. Janet has been involved with the group for more than 10 years.

The UGIC celebrated 10 years of CMA's in 2007 with recognition of a Landcare Group. Groups were asked to prepare a DVD, poster or presentation of their most significant project. The award was presented to Merton Landcare Group for its long term efforts in environment management and its history project created on a DVD. The awards were presented at a celebration dinner at the Mansfield Hotel and were attended by CMA Board Chair Stephen Mills and the Deputy Chair John Pettigrew.



Above: Hubert Miller OAM congratulates Janet Hagen who received the Hubert Miller Perpetual Trophy for community engagement.
Below: John Fraser (Merton Landcare) wins the Landcare Award for Excellence.




Left: Bev Day, Merton Landcare Group, receives the Award from Goulburn Broken CMA Board Chair, Stephen Mills,



SULFIDIC SEDIMENTS

THREATENING AUSTRALIA'S
INLAND WETLANDS



Brochure available from the Murray Darling Freshwater Research Centre.
Ph (02) 6058 2300
or at the website below.

www.mdfrc.org.au

Delatite revegetation program in Focus

The Goulburn Broken Catchment Management Authority (CMA) has secured **Recreational Fishing Licence (RFL) funding for habitat works along the Delatite River.**

Works will include enhancement of instream habitat – construction of groynes & boulder seeding to improve fish habitat at 3-4 sites, similar to works undertaken previously at River Rock Quarry, Piries, where the river was shallow and flooding out onto the adjacent paddocks.

Fisheries Victoria has confirmed that habitat degradation in most locations is restricted to the riparian zone. The lack of large shading vegetation (other than willows) and the predominance of stock grazing right up to the stream bank (and into the stream) is the main habitat issue for the Delatite River.

Fencing works undertaken within this

financial year could be fully funded by utilising the Drought Employment Program (DEP) that is currently operating in the Goulburn Broken catchment. Through the Drought Employment Program, the CMA will supply materials and DEP employees will erect fencing at no cost to landholders.

Several sites have been identified and planning is well underway.

Landholders interested in participating in the Waterways Revegetation Program should contact CMA representatives for information on Grants available through the waterways division of the GB CMA.



Letter from Alberta—Poppe Davis

Information; Courtesy of the Edmonton Journal.

Having just returned from Canada I would like to share my observations of some environmental issues of concern to Canadians at the moment.

"Canada's boreal forest is about half the size of the world's tropical forests, but contains almost twice as much carbon per square metre, largely because cold temperatures have slowed decomposition, and organic soils and thick carbon rich peats have built up over centuries."

"An international coalition of environmentalists is putting timberland in the spotlight in an attempt to preserve at least half of Canada's boreal forest from logging and other mineral and energy enterprises."

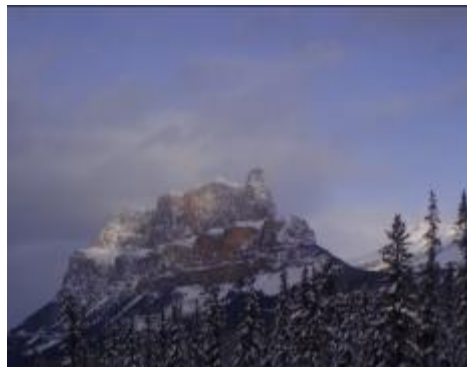
It is estimated that the forests contain about 186 billion tonnes of carbon—27 times the amount released globally by burning fossil fuels each year.

"Scientists predict that climate change will have a profound impact on the carbon balance of Canada's forests, as indications are that in the last few decades of the 20th century, wildfires and increases in the annual harvest have accounted for a slowdown in carbon uptake. "

"Werner Kurz from the Canadian Forest Service says that the forest fires accounted for up to 45% of Canada's total greenhouse gas emissions.

"Mr Kurz believes that there is a high chance that Canada's forests will become a source of greenhouse gases in the near future due to increases in wildfires, and pests such as the mountain pine beetle, which has left a swathe of dead trees in its wake. "

Canada's environmental issues are very similar to our own.



"Thumbs up!"
Spruce forests in Banff National Park.

Youth Conference

In October 2007, the GB CMA sponsored 48 student delegates from the Goulburn Broken catchment to attend the International River Health Conference in Canberra.

Delegates were amazed at the amount of environmental information available and at the number of schools that had prepared presentations on issues faced in their area.

Our students participated in a variety of presentations from schools and environmental specialists from all over Australia. They also attended the panel discussion which included Greens Senator Christine Milne, Dr Wendy Craik (MDBC), Professor Gary Jones (eWater Cooperative Research Centre) and the inspirational Daniel Adams from the Oaktree Foundation (Make Poverty History).

Euroa and Alexandra Secondary Colleges presented workshops on 'Eco living school environment' and 'How healthy is the upper Goulburn River'.



Goulburn Broken catchment delegates at the rear of Parliament House in Canberra.

Sustainability Focus in Murrindindi.

The Murrindindi Climate Network has organized a forum on climate change for April 19th in Yea. The forum will include a number of exhibits from organizations and companies that specialize in sustainable development and living.

Presenters include:

- ... **Brad Shone from Alternative Technology Association** - Renewable Energy Policy in Australia and in Victoria. Current grant schemes on federal and state level available to the community.
- ... **Michael Cox, Resident in Alexandra** - his experience with building a sustainable home.
- ... **Tony Richardson, TreeSmart Australia** - different carbon offset schemes available in Australia and how they fit into a future Carbon Emission Trading Scheme
- ... **Representative of Moreland Energy Foundation** - community programs,
- ... **Representative of Murrindindi Council** - speaking about the various sustainability services and activities offered to the community.

For further information contact:

Jenneke Kylstra; Coordinator Mob: 0433 199 978

info@murrindindiclimatenetwork.org.au

The GBCMA website is under constant renewal and revision.

Use our site to link with other environmental sites.

Goulburn Broken CMA



www.gbcma.vic.gov.au