



CELEBRATING 20 YEARS

Newsletter

UPCOMING EVENTS - 2014

No. 42 Autumn 2014

CIRCLE these upcoming events in your diary if you don't want to miss out. Project Platypus invites people to take part in a number of exciting upcoming events organised for 2014. Please take this opportunity to hear from informative and inspirational farmers and to participate in events that can help you farm more sustainably and profitably into the future. These events also provide a fantastic opportunity to network and socialise with other farmers. For more information or to book please phone the Project Platypus office on 53584410.

CARBON FARMING TOUR - FREE EVENT

When: Thursday 3rd April 4.30pm – 9.00pm

Where: Depart from Project Platypus Office
11a Ararat Rd Stawell.

BBQ dinner provided, BYO drinks

RSVP Project Platypus 5358 4410 by Tuesday 1st April

FOR MORE INFORMATION SEE PAGE 2



WIMMERA MASTER TREE GROWERS COURSE

Day 1: Monday 28/4/14, Introduction

Day 2: Monday 5/5/14, Measurement and markets

Day 3: Monday 12/5/14, Products and markets

Day 4: Monday 19/5/14, Tree growth and management

Day 5: (Tour) Saturday 24/5/14 Bamba Farm visit

Day 6: (Tour) Sunday 25/5/14, Aesthetics and environmental benefits

Day 7: Monday 2/6/14, Economics

Day 8: Tuesday 10/6/14, 'where to from here' & peer mentoring

FOR MORE INFORMATION SEE PAGE 3



CHICKS IN THE STICKS - FREE EVENT

When: Friday 16th May 9.30am – 2.30pm

Where: Depart from Project Platypus Office
11a Ararat Rd Stawell. (bus provided)

Tour of 'Burrum Biodynamics' with a high tea style luncheon provided

RSVP Project Platypus 5358 4410 by Mon 12th May

FOR MORE INFORMATION SEE PAGE 3



Feature Stories:

Upcoming Events

Carbon Farming Tour Invitation

Wimmera Master Tree Growers Course

Chicks in the Sticks Invitation

Stawell Urban LC Nest Boxes

Tax Benefits for Landcare Operations

Pass the Baton Seminar

Join Us For Plantout

Project Platypus - 20 years...

Grampians to Pyrenees Biolink

Wimmera LC Community Celebration

New Income Ideas for Landholders

Regular Features:

Project Platypus Update

Perennial Pasture Systems Update

On Ground Works - Update

Landcare Groups Update

Grant Information Details

Events Calendar

**MAKE A NOTE
IN YOUR DIARY FOR**

PLANTOUT

July 2014



Welcome to the Autumn edition of the Project Platypus and Upper Wimmera Landcare Newsletter. This year will mark the 20th year since Project Platypus's inception back in 1994 by a number key farmers and community leaders. It is pleasing to be part of a movement that has stood the test of time while continuing to build capacity to achieve its stated purpose. Planning has commenced to commemorate this significant milestone to be held later in the year on the 6th of October. Throughout this newsletter you will find a range of other events scattered throughout the year, so I would encourage you to get out your diary, calendar or smart phone and note any dates now so that you don't miss these great opportunities.

The first event to kick off the year has been the farm succession workshop held in February. This was a great night had by many, with an excellent guest speaker, delicious food, and thought provoking discussion. I'd like to recognise Northern Grampians Shire for their contribution towards this event. I'd also like to recognise the amazing effort that Bronwyn Bant put in to organising this event and planning other events for the year. Bronwyn has put together the 2014 calendar of events before headed off on maternity leave for 12 months with the recent birth of her daughter, Georgia. On behalf of the Landcare Community we wish her all the best during this time.

Project Platypus 'on ground' works program continues to achieve some excellent results, with the completion of an erosion control structure on the Glenlofty Creek, planning for the 2014 Revegetation and Remnant Protection program, and the extensive achievements of the Weed and Rabbit program. I'd like to recognise the enthusiasm that our Landcare Groups put into this work, and especially those specific landholders who year after year continue to persist in reducing the extent of weeds on their property. Sometimes it is hard to appreciate how much is achieved in this area because it is often difficult to imagine what it would have looked like if nothing was done.

The Landmate program continues to be well utilised by Landholders and Landcare Groups within the Upper Wimmera, with teams being able to assist with fencing work immediately after the fires in the Northern Grampians and Laharum area. Well done to Bob Wallace for facilitating this process in a timely fashion and a huge thank you to Peter Jackman with assisting in linking this crew with priority activities utilising his interment knowledge of the local community and the impact this fire had.

Project Platypus subcommittees continue to play an important role in our work focusing on project development and implementation advice, policy development and helping with setting priorities across the Upper Catchment. I would like to thank all those involved and open the invitation up to anyone else interested, please make contact and come along to any of these meetings. Being a community driven organisation we are always seeking direction from the community and developing projects and matching these up with funding opportunities where appropriate. I would specifically like to mention the successful African Weed Orchid workshop that was hosted by the Invasive Plant and Animal Subcommittee in late February. We had a great turn out and as a group methodically went through the severity of the problem, and developed a united way forward with this introduced problem orchid. It was great to have so much contribution from those in attendance, a special thank you to Alistair Stephens for bringing everyone together and also to Neil Marriott, Adam Merrick and David Handscombe for sharing of their extensive knowledge of this plant and control methods available.

Enjoy your read and thank you for being part of the Upper Wimmera Landcare Community,

Leigh Blackmore
Project Platypus Manager

CARBON FARMING TOUR

Bob Wallace

Extra income, improved biodiversity, shelter for livestock and carbon sequestration. How the Carbon Farming Initiative can work for you.

Join Project Platypus on an evening tour of Peter and Christine Forster's property south of Ararat. Close to 25% of their property has been revegetated, and the Forster's are using these plantings for multiple farming, environmental, biodiversity and now alternative income benefits through the Carbon Farming Initiative.

Peter Forster was recently awarded Victorian Landcarer of the Year, and is widely known and regarded for his active commitment to the environment. Take a look at what the Forster's have achieved, and learn more about on-farm revegetation and the Carbon Farming Initiative.

When: Thursday 3rd April 4.30pm – 9.00pm

Where: The tour will depart from the Project Platypus Office, 11a Ararat Rd Stawell.

BBQ dinner provided, BYO drinks. This is a free event

RSVP by calling Project Platypus on 5358 4410 by Tuesday 1st April.

For information or to register contact Bob Wallace at Project Platypus on 03 5358 4410.

"Having gone through the process, we believe we understand most of the problems other farmers may encounter and we are happy to help farmers who want to undertake native revegetation projects and earn carbon credits" Peter Forster.



WIMMERA MASTER TREE GROWERS COURSE

Bob Wallace



Are you interested in Agroforestry? Would you like to generate extra income on the farm, grow trees for profit or on farm use? Learn more about farm tree management and farm scale logging. Learn about low rainfall plantation species. Increase biodiversity and productivity, provide shade and shelter for stock. The Wimmera Master Growers course is for you! This course has been subsidised by the Federal Government. The cost of the course for Landholders is \$200 or \$180 for members of Landcare groups. Course costs cover the bus tour, accommodation, lunches, and training materials (books, measuring tape etc.)

dates are as follows...

- Day 1: Monday 28/4/14, Introduction
- Day 2: Monday 5/5/14, Measurement and markets
- Day 3: Monday 12/5/14, Products and markets
- Day 4: Monday 19/5/14, Tree growth and management
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- Day 6: (Tour) Sunday 25/5/14, Aesthetics and environmental benefits
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For more information or to register contact Bob Wallace at Project Platypus on 03 5358 4410



CHICKS IN THE STICKS - 16th May, 2014

Cathy McDermott



TO THE LADY OF THE FARM Frock up, pull on those gumboots and join other farming women for a guided farm tour followed by a high tea style luncheon. A bus will leave from the Project Platypus office at 9.30am on **Friday 16th May, 2014** to Marnoo and return by 2.30pm. **Free Event**

Ladies you are invited to take a tour of a fabulous local farm enterprise, Burrum Biodynamics www.burumbiodynamics.com.au. Located in Marnoo, Burrum Biodynamics are producing lentils, peas, barley, spelt and oats and fat lambs of premium quality using sustainable farming practices. Stephen and Tania Walter are taking clean, green organic farming to a whole new level through cutting edge biodynamic farming. Project Platypus and Wimmera CMA are excited to showcase their property, as not only are they using sustainable farming practices, they've also recently started processing and selling their own produce. Bring along some spare cash as there will be an opportunity to purchase their produce.

Following the farm tour, a high tea style luncheon will be provided by the Marnoo CWA at the Marnoo Hall. A further feature of the afternoon will be hearing from the Runner Up of the 2013 RIRDC Rural Women's Awards, Jo Clifford. Jo will present her abstract 'Beyond Farmer's Wife', Rural women as innovators, leaders and drivers of social change.

Chicks in the Sticks is a fun women only event which provides an opportunity for local women to put on a pretty dress and gumboots and get together and hear about the innovative practices landholders have put in place to balance their farm business and the environment. To book a place on the bus, please **RSVP** before Monday 12th May, 2013 by email at admin@platypus.org.au or by phoning the Project Platypus office on 53 584410.





Byron Grinham and Jayden McCartney from Stawell secondary College year 8 Tech Class



Bob Wallace placing the nest boxes in the Ironbarks Reserve

The Stawell Urban Landcare group have successfully completed a nesting box project through funding from the Mazda Foundation. The aim of this project is to create habitat in the Box/Iron Bark forests around Stawell for threatened and endangered species. Box Iron Bark forests in Victoria contain over 20 species which are listed as threatened under Victorian and Australian legislation.

The project involved the construction and installation of nesting boxes and is designed to complement the Iron Barks walk conducted by the Stawell Urban Landcare group with primary school students from Stawell West and 502. The project involves several community groups. The year 8 Technology class at the Stawell Secondary College constructed the nesting boxes and the Stawell Urban Landcare Group has installed the boxes, and they will be monitored for occupancy rates.

The boxes will be monitored to make sure that intended species adopt them as their new home. Often unwelcome guests can occupy the nesting boxes like bees and swallows. Stawell Urban Landcare group would like to create a social awareness of the need for habitat and its relevance to biodiversity. Stawell Urban Landcare group would like to invite anyone who is interested in getting involved with the Nesting Box project to contact Project Platypus on 03 5358 4410.



TAX BENEFITS FOR LANDCARE OPERATIONS

Barry Curtis

When your accountant calculates your taxable income for a particular year, the tax office will allow inclusion in your list of expenses, capital expenditure incurred by you on landcare operations. Of course the land must have been used for primary production.

A **landcare operation** is one of the following:

- erecting fences to separate different land classes. There must be an [approved land management plan](#)
- constructing a levee or similar improvement
- erecting fence to keep out animals from areas affected by land degradation
- constructing drainage works, other than the draining of low-lying areas, to control salinity or assist in drainage control
- an operation for eradicating animal pests
- an operation for eradicating weeds
- an operation for preventing land degradation other than by the use of fences, or
- an extension, alteration or addition to any of the assets described above.

An **approved land management plan** is a plan that:

- shows the different classes within the land and the location of any fencing needed to separate any of the land classes to prevent land degradation
- describes the kind of fencing and how it will prevent land degradation, and
- has been prepared by, or approved in writing as a suitable plan for the land by
 - an officer of an Australian government agency responsible for land conservation who has authority to do so, or
 - an individual who was at the time approved as a farm consultant.

The DAFF website has further information about approved officers. <http://www.daff.gov.au/>

If you are carrying on a primary production business on the land, you may claim the deduction even if you are only a lessee of the land. These deductions are not available to a partnership. Expenses for landcare operations incurred by a partnership are allocated to each partner who can then claim the relevant deduction in respect of their share of the expenditure.

Please note, the above information is a summary of current taxation legislation as provided by the tax office and you should discuss this matter with your tax advisor before engaging in this expenditure with the expectation of gaining a deduction.

JOIN US FOR PLANTOUT 2014

Leigh Blackmore

This years Plantout will involve four community plantings, four schools plantings and one corporate/group plantings. The community plantings will again be held through the months of July, where local and visiting volunteers will be encouraged to come along and lend a hand. The planting activities will again be themed with the aim of involving a wide range of volunteers in this important work.

The first to kick off will be a site near Pomonal on Saturday 5th of July, where volunteers will plant 2,500 plants. With assistance from Jallukar Landcare Group in hosting the planting day, backpackers and other visitors to Halls Gap will be encouraged to come along and help, with a minibus running from the YHA. The second event will be held in the Norval area with assistance from the Moyston Landcare Group. This event will be targeted at youth from Melbourne, where a day of planting 6,000 trees will conclude with night of live music and DJs playing electronic music. The third event will be held at Barkly on Sunday 20th July where volunteers will plant 3,900 plants. This event will feature locally produced gourmet food throughout the day. The final community planting day scheduled for Saturday 26th of July will be held at Crowlands with the assistance of the Crowlands Landcare Group where 2,500 plants will be ready to be put into the ground. Project Platypus has partnered with Ararat Live for this event where the days planting will be followed by live music at the Crowlands Hall. At this stage we have Carus Thompson lined up, but this will be confirmed closer to the date. We also have an opportunity for a small group, possibly a corporate group, where we have 500 plants to be planted at a site in Armstrong. There is also accommodation on site. This opportunity has not yet been filled, so if you know of anyone that might be interested, please get in touch.

Then we have the school plantings to be undertaken, where we have 3,300 plants to be planted by local school across the area. We see this as a very important aspect of our work, ensuring children have an opportunity to contribute to the environmental health of the region in a positive way. We always have tremendous support from the teachers and schools for these planting activities which is very much appreciated. This year we will also be hosting a planting with Carey Grammar, who are based in Melbourne and are keen for their students to experience a day of tree planting. We are looking forward to hosting these city kids providing them with an opportunity to experience country Victoria.



PROJECT PLATYPUS - 20 YEARS ON

Leigh Blackmore

"Clean Water Revival", "Platypus Survival", "Platypus Project" & "Wimmera Solution 2000" were some of names that were thrown around back in 1994 when trying to decide what to call this group that would act as an umbrella body for the 11 Landcare Groups of the Upper Wimmera. 20 Years later and the name "Project Platypus" has been engrained the Upper Wimmera Landcare Community, and the broader farming and natural resource management communities in Western Victoria and beyond. This year we will celebrate 20 years of operation with a tour of past works and a celebratory dinner to be held in early October. Leanne Jackman is leading a small committee in organising this event. If you would like to get involved or would like to contribute in any way, then please get in touch and express your interest. This is a significant milestone for our organisation and all those that have been involved in any way over the years should be extremely proud of being part of Project Platypus and its achievements.

GRAMPIANS TO PYRENEES BIOLINK

Leigh Blackmore

The Grampians to Pyrenees Biolink Project continues again this year with funding received from the Australian Government which was announced late last year. The next phase of the project is more targeted with works confined to specific geographical areas between the Grampians and Pyrenees Ranges. This project will again be delivered in partnership with the Wimmera CMA, but this next phase has brought in other partners including Glenelg Hopkins CMA, Parks Victoria, Trust for Nature, Conservation Volunteers Australia and Central Victorian Biolinks Group.

The project will work with private landholders to fence remnant vegetation, including that on waterways, strategically-selected areas of land will undergo revegetation and large areas of public land will have increased rabbit and weed management works to reduce the risk of the improved connectivity contributing to the spread of these species.

The Grampians to Pyrenees Biolink is a significant link between two major visionary Bio-links 'Habitat 141' which straddles the Victorian/ Southern Australian Border and the 'Great Eastern Ranges Corridor' which follows the Great Dividing Range right through to Far North Queensland. It provides habitat through a combination of stepping stones and wildlife corridors enabling ecological function to be maintained through a myriad of farmland and public conservation areas.

An exciting component of this project is to develop a 10 year strategic Grampians to Pyrenees Connectivity Plan which will further refine priority works and areas to assist in achieving the aim of "improving the ecological connectivity between the Grampians and Pyrenees Ranges". It has been well recognised that this plan will need to optimise ecological needs while considering farming and community priorities. It is great to have Central Victorian Biolink Group facilitating this process and with so many enthusiastic stakeholders involved.

Meet Phillip and bring the kids along to see and touch our local wildlife!

Phillip's inspiring designs promote self-sufficiency, where indigenous plants and wildlife can flourish and encourage children to reconnect with nature

FREE
EVENT



Sustainable Landscape Designer

PHILLIP JOHNSON

Winner of the 'Best in Show' garden at the 2013 Chelsea International Flower Show

**Visiting the Wimmera on Friday 4th April 2014
5pm at Holy Trinity Lutheran School Hall Horsham**



For further information phone Wimmera CMA 5382 1544

NEW INCOME SOURCE IDEAS FOR LANDHOLDERS

Contribution

The idea of opening the front gate to visitors may seem crazy to many landholders but not to Samantha Chaffey and Eric Lemoussu of Gippsland who are earning another farm income from offering authentic camping sites. Their motivation is to have a diversified farm income so the health of their land isn't compromised.

Public camping grounds are restrictive and often full and not all travellers want to stay in van park camping suburbia or highway rest areas. Also, travellers want authentic experiences away from the well-trodden tourist track.

Farmers and landholders are looking for new income streams that contribute to a property being managed sustainably, Youcamp.com meets both these needs. Almost every property has a spot that travellers would like to visit – a river or creek frontage, a private fishing spot, a beautiful dam or even just a big shady tree that would be perfect to park a fully self-contained campervan under.

Youcamp.com has recently listed a number of Victorian properties where the owners have been stunned at the interest from the

public, they contacted the local Council to check the rules for allowing visitors onto private land and asked each group who arrived to sign a waiver.

The biggest feedback we're getting from existing Youcamp hosts is their surprise at generating another farm income which goes back into landcare activities, weed control and sustainable agriculture etc. It seems that Youcamp is very appealing to landholders who want a diversified farm income so they can manage their land sustainably. If you are interested in obtaining more information please contact 'YouCamp'

ADVENTURES ON PRIVATE LAND

YOU CAMP

PO BOX 588 MORUYA NSW 2537	PHONE 0427 825 273
INFO@YOUCAMP.COM	WWW.YOUCAMP.COM



'PASS THE BATON' SEMINAR

Cathy McDermott



Forty people attended a farm succession planning seminar held at the Comfort Inn in Stawell last month. The event was part of the annual Farming in the 21st Century series and was supported by the Northern Grampians Shire Council, Project Platypus Upper Wimmera Landcare and the Australian Government. The session featured guest speaker, Alan Blackburn who has a range of experience in the field of succession planning. Project Platypus selected this topic because establishing a clear succession plan assists in long term planning decision making and helps provide clarity and certainty to all family members. During the session participants learnt about retirement planning, what their capital and income needs might be and some of the essential accounting and financial aspects of succession planning. We've had some really positive feedback from the night.



PERENNIAL PASTURE SYSTEMS

Rob Shea



The 5th Annual Perennial Pasture Systems (PPS) conference held in September was titled "having a crack at what's holding us back" (What's limiting us in perennial grazing systems).

The conference commenced with a seminar session at Gum San Ararat with PPS President Ben Greene welcoming people before handing over to PPS Project Manager Rob Shea and PPS member Dr Wayne Burton who provided an update on the PPS research projects.

The invited speaker's session followed, starting with Andrew Whitlock from Precision Agriculture, who presented information on within paddock testing and the variation in potential production found by the testing regimes. Andrew included results from the PPS variable lime project which has started to produce some interesting data. Dr Rob Norton from the International Plant Nutrition

Institute followed with a presentation on plant nutrition limitations. Rob's talk was well received as he was able to work through some fairly complex information in a readily accessible way.

Dr Bill Malcolm from Melbourne University then discussed the economics of pasture improvement and how to measure the gains made. Bill also conveyed to the crowd that economists do have a sense of humour and his presentation was enjoyed by all. He was followed by Sandy McEachern from Holmes and Sackett, Wagga, whose talk on labour efficiencies in productive grazing systems addressed some of the issues being faced by producers who are increasing farm production through improved pasture systems. Sandy's talk created a lot of discussion, both in question time and later in the day when he joined the group on the bus tour.

A short sponsorship session followed the invited speakers with Rob Barnes from Rural Finance outlining some of the financial options available to farmers and Dougal Purcell from DEPI who discussed the Better Beef network project. The support of the Ararat Rural City was also acknowledged.

Just before the lunch break a presentation of the Wimmera Landcare Local Group Award was made by Karen Douglas chair of the Wimmera CMA recognising the PPS group's success in the 2013 awards. After lunch the conference headed out of town by bus to inspect the Edgarley property of Pat and Sarah Milliar at Willaura, where many of the principles discussed in the morning seminar were seen in action in a large scale productive farming system. Inspections of pasture, grazing wheat, canola, lupin and recently sown lucerne paddocks were undertaken in persistent light rain but that didn't diminish the enthusiasm of participants given the opportunity to inspect such an impressive property. The group then headed to the relative warmth of the historic Edgarley woolshed where Pat outlined more detail of the farm operation.

The conference then adjourned to the Blue Duck Hotel in Ararat for the Annual Dinner, which was preceded by the PPS annual meeting which saw Paul Harrington elected as the new president. Wayne Burton was elected vice president and two vacancies on the management committee were filled by Rebecca McKay and Hayden Price. Outgoing President Ben Greene commented on the success of the conference describing PPS as a niche group in the farming community specialising in perennial pastures which was able to attract ninety participants over the day and evening. He welcomed the two new management committee members and thanked the outgoing members Rob Gee and Tom Small as well as Rod Marshall who offered himself for election. Ben also thanked research site funders and supporters and acknowledged the continued support of the Wimmera CMA for the PPS project manager funding.

The evening finished with guest speaker Alan Green from Green Eggs, Great Western, who went straight into the "having a crack" theme by producing a stock whip which he cracked several times during his informative and inspirational address which completed a very successful fifth Annual PPS conference.



For further information on Perennial Pasture Systems
contact PPS project manager Rob Shea on 0438 521357
or email: yadin@netconnect.com.au

ON GROUND WORKS UPDATE

INVASIVE PLANTS & ANIMALS : by Allistair Stephens

Since the last update, our spray crew has completed almost six months of weed and rabbit control work across the Upper Catchment. With the approval of the Sallow Wattle control project at the beginning of this financial year mapping for the target area between the Grampians and the Black Range to the east of Stawell has been completed. Sallow Wattle along Pleasant Creek near the Grange Golf course has been mapped and removed by hand pulling and chain sawing for the larger plants. All Sallow Wattle along Pleasant Creek inside the golf course has been removed and alternative local species given to the golf course in return. Management staff of the Grange Golf course should be congratulated for their support of control activities. This area and all other areas of Sallow Wattle infestation will require follow-up for many years to come due to the heavy and long lived bank of seed that will be present in surrounding soil.

Project Platypus has completed three weeks of work in total for ParksVic since the last report. Bridal Creeper that was mapped in Jallukar Forest using our GPS equipped tablet in 2012 was used again to find each infestation and control with herbicide during September 2013. In early January this year our spray team completed another week of work for ParksVic controlling St John's Wort in the Ararat Hill regional park.

Project Platypus continues to work with Ararat Rural City Council (ARCC) on their roadside Weeds and Rabbits program. This seasons work has been completed with hundreds of hectares of roadside weed and rabbit control completed across the ARCC municipal area.

Similar work has also been completed for Northern Grampians Shire (NGS) in the Crowlands area with two valuable days of follow-up work completed along Moore's road for Horehound and rabbit control. This section of road was cleaned-up a number of years ago with the current follow-up work being very timely to eradicate emergent Horehound and rabbit re-infestations. This follow-up control work is a great example of co-operation across land tenures with Horehound controlled in an adjacent paddock to Moores road in the previous month for Crowlands landcare group. Rabbit control works were also completed for NGS along Neil road Pomonal which have complemented works completed on adjacent private property and a number of days completed for VicRoads along the Halls Gap – Moyston road in the same area. Completion of works in this area has involved three different land tenures and managers to achieve neighbourhood wide control of rabbits and represents what Project Platypus aims to achieve in all work we do.

Excellent follow-up work has also been completed in the Black Range area for St John's Wort control and Rabbits across a number of neighbouring properties. Real gains are now evident from four years of consecutive St John's Wort control on these properties with a drastic reduction of the number of plants encountered. The same can be said for the number of rabbits encountered on the same properties which historically have supported high rabbit numbers being Granite sand country. The landholders concerned should be applauded for their willingness to persevere with control work over a number of years with significant personal financial outlay.

In the coming months Project Platypus will be completing Spiny Rush control for GWMWater around Lake Fyans, Broom control for Stawell Urban Landcare Group in Stawell and Spiny Rush and Rabbit control works for Jallukar Landcare group.

NATIVE VEGETATION : by David Margetson

The 2014 revegetation program is considerably smaller than over the last few years. The main reason for this is that the Grampians to Pyrenees project is very geographically targeted. We would be happy to hear from anybody in the G2P area for reveg going forward or remnant protection that can take place any time from now until 2016. A large scale map of the area can be found on our website at www.platypus.org.au or contact David to check your eligibility. For anyone outside of the G2P area we have grant applications pending that are more focussed on shelterbelts to improve farm productivity. We are more than happy to look at any native vegetation projects as we are often attracting funding on a site by site basis. At this stage we have both the Stawell Gold Mine and Carey Grammar contributing to projects. Having a list of landholders and sites means that we can aim to find grant opportunities to match. In these cases it is important to have a long lead time to find funding and have enough time to order plants and prepare sites to get the job done. If anybody has a revegetation or remnant protection project that they would like to do please contact David Margetson on 0427 881 021 or Project Platypus office on 5358 4410

EROSION CONTROL : by Brendan Barbetti

Work has currently begun on the Glenlofty Creek erosion control project on Ben Greene's property at Elmhurst. The project aims to construct 2 Rock Chutes on the Glenlofty Creek to reduce the erosion occurring in the creek and to stop this erosion moving further upstream. The financial support for the project has come in part from the Wimmera CMA and the "Communities for Nature" program which has provided Project Platypus with a grant to actively reduce the adverse effects of erosion on river health and the declining Platypus populations in the Upper Wimmera catchment. It is the hope that with more work in the catchment by the Wimmera CMA and Project Platypus, and help and support from the community, we will be able to halt the decline of these important and unique animals. Small scale maintenance works are also planned this year for Mount Drummond and Astons Scour.



ON GROUND WORKS UPDATE ...CONTINUED

LANDMATE : by Bob Wallace

On Thursday the 27th of February the Minister for Corrections Edward O'Donohue, Member for Lowan Hugh Delahunty, Member for Western Victoria Simon Ramsay, Project Platypus staff and Management Committee members, officials from Corrections Victoria and local landholders, met in Dadswell's Bridge to inspect fire recovery work completed by the Upper Hopkins Landmate crew (Ararat). The Landmate crew have been busy with fire recovery work in farming communities in the Northern Grampians Landcare group area. They have been removing fencing wire and clearing debris from fence lines in Laharum and Dadswell's Bridge. Other work completed by the crew involved erosion control work in the Black Range area. Project Platypus would like to thank Peter Jackman for assisting with the coordination of the crews, while they worked in the Dadswell's Bridge area. If you would like to register for environmental or community work please contact Bob Wallace the Landmate Co-ordinator on 03 5358 4410.



SOUTH AFRICAN WEED ORCHID MEETING

Allistair Stephens

A recent subcommittee meeting was held on Tuesday the 25th of February at the Project Platypus office with a focus on South African weed Orchid (SAWO). The purpose of the meeting was to gather all landholders and agency staff relevant to SAWO control in the upper Wimmera and hear peoples experiences and set a collective way forward for control efforts in our area.

Representatives were present from DEPI, Parks Victoria, various landcare groups and local government to share their collective experience. The main result to come out of the meeting was that SAWO is now a wide spread and established weed in our area and that control efforts into the future will need to be targeted to protect areas of high value remnant vegetation with significant threatened species present. This approach is otherwise known as 'asset protection' and aims to control invasive species in and around high value areas to protect the 'asset' (a threatened native orchid species for example). This is also the best hope for gaining funding for control work for SAWO as it is not a prescribed noxious species (regionally controlled, restricted plant etc.) which makes it difficult to gain funding from government that is generally tied to a particular species. Funding can however be tied to protecting a particular threatened species or vegetation type with grassy woodlands being high on the list of vegetation communities that attract grant funding. This vegetation community is one of the more vulnerable and widespread communities in our area in regard to SAWO infestation.

Those attending also agreed that Project Platypus should try and gain funding for a more in-depth review of SAWO control experience from Western Australia and South Australia where SAWO is well established. A project proposal will be submitted when a suitable grant opportunity presents that will enable key assets (reserves and threatened species) under threat in the upper catchment to be accurately identified. Depending on what information is gathered from experience in other areas, a trial of the most effective herbicide and control method may be required to see what proves to be the most effective for controlling SAWO in our area.



South African Weed Orchid

**Check out the new Weed Information
on our Website - www.platypus.org.au**

UPPER WIMMERA LANDCARE GROUPS UPDATE

Black Range:

President: Neil Marriott

Secretary: Helen Rosenbaum

The group has been evaluating its health and has made the decision to become an unincorporated group to reduce the administrative burden of the few active members. The group will continue to undertake projects and organise meetings as needed. The group is keen to strengthen its ties with the Jallukar Landcare Group and has decided to attend their regular meetings, rather than organising their own.

Concongella:

President: Malcolm Nicholson

Secretary: Mark McLean

Concongella Landcare Group have received funding through the Victorian Landcare Grant to be spent on weed and rabbit control

Crowlands President: Dennis Harrington

Secretary: Harold Thomas

Crowlands Landcare Group were successful with their application to control Spiny Rush and the destruction of rabbit harbor through the Victorian Landcare Grant. The members will conduct the Spiny Rush control work themselves using the group's spray trailer, to maximize the funding for on ground works.

Elmhurst:

President: Bill Langcake

Secretary: Christine Baines

Elmhurst Landcare Group were able to obtain funding from the Victorian Landcare grants to carry out rabbit ripping works and to spray problem weeds. The group will be doing some restoration work in the Wimmera River Reserve, this will include planting trees and repairing fences that were destroyed in the floods, and the group would like to involve the local community in this project.

Great Western:

President: Mark Kindred

Secretary: Paul Dakis

Jallukar:

President: Terry May

Secretary: Fred Rich

Jallukar Landcare Group have received funding through the Victorian Landcare Grants to spray Spiny Rush and carry out rabbit control work in the area.

Landsborough:

President: Daryl Leslie

Secretary: Greg Dean

Landsborough Landcare Group have obtained funding through the Victorian Government's Communities for Nature Grants. The group will continue follow up control works of Patterson's Curse, Gorse, Horehound and St John's Wort, most work will be carried out around the township area of Landsborough district.

Moyston:

President: David Coad

Secretary: Rosie Nater

Moyston Landcare Group has received funding from the Victorian Landcare Grants. Mapping of Chilean Needle Grass, an isolated infestation of this 'Weed of National Significance' in the Wimmera has been completed for control work to be carried out in May. Some control work for Patterson's Curse is included in this project.

Navarre:

President: Shane Bibby

Secretary: Richard & Liz Kelleher

Northern Grampians:

President: Peter Jackman

Secretary: Judy Dunkley

Stawell Urban:

President: Angela Baker

Secretary: Cathy McDermott

The Stawell Urban Landcare group have successfully completed a nesting box project through funding from the Mazda Foundation. The group also participated in the 'clean up Australia' day with a good attendance.

Glenorchy:

President: Daryl Barber

Secretary: Michele Forbes

The Glenorchy Improvement Group has received funding from the Victorian Government's Communities for Nature Grants. The Wimmera River weed control and revegetation project, the group are in the process of establishing a designated walking track, several species of woody weeds will be removed from the river bank, Desert Ash and Spiny Broom. Bridal Creeper control work will be carried out later in the year. The group will plant trees along the river bank. The group would like to use guest speakers to talk about native flora and fauna, to engage the Glenorchy community.

GRANT INFORMATION DETAILS

Title/Provider	Grant Detail/ Aims	Closing Date	Value
Communities for Nature	Aims to support practical action by community groups, schools, and volunteer organisations to deliver measurable environmental outcomes through on ground works. For further information please contact the grants information line on 1300 366 356 or visit http://www.depi.vic.gov.au/environment-and-wildlife/community-programs/communities-for-nature-grants	11th April, 2014	Upto \$10,000
Junior Landcare	Coles Junior Landcare Garden Grants are offered over three rounds each year. NOTE: All schools, kindergartens, daycare centres, and youth/community groups (e.g. Scouts) are eligible to apply for a Coles Junior Landcare Garden grant. Head to the 'grants' page on the Junior Landcare website at www.juniorlandcare.com.au	2nd May 2014	\$1,000

EVENTS CALENDAR

March	
27	Crowlands Landcare Group meeting 7.30pm @ Crowlands Hall
April	
3	Carbon Farming Tour 4.30pm - 9.00pm BBQ dinner provided contact Bob Wallace on 5358 4410
4	Meet Phillip Johnson, Sustainable Landscape Designer 5pm Holy Trinity Lutheran School Hall, Horsham
8	Stawell Urban LC Group meeting 7.30pm @ PP office contact Cathy McDermott on 5358 4410
16	Community Engagement Subcommittee meeting 3pm @ PP Office
28	Native Veg & Waterways Subcommittee meeting 7.30pm @ PP office
28	Wimmera Masters Tree Growers Course held April - June contact Bob Wallace on 5358 4410
May	
2	Moyston Community Meal @ Moyston Pavilion \$15 for 2 course meal Kids \$6 Theme: German food.
7	Moyston Landcare Group meeting @ Fire Shed contact Rosie Nater 5354 2512
16	Chicks in the Sticks bus trip to "Burrum Biodynamics" contact Cathy McDermott 5358 4410
June	
10	Final day of the Wimmera Tree Growers Course contact Bob Wallace on 5358 4410
July	
5	Plantout @ Pomonal , Theme: Backpackers
12	Plantout @ Norval, Theme: Bushdoof
20	Plantout @ Navarre, Theme: Foodie
26	Plantout @ Great Western/Moyston, Theme: Live music with Ararat Live

PROJECT PLATYPUS COMMITTEE & STAFF MEMBERS

Project Platypus Management Committee

Phil Hall, Chairman
 Steven Start , Vice Chairman
 Michael Greene, Treasurer
 Mark McKew, Secretary
 Leanne Jackman
 Rosie Nater
 Michael McMurtrie
 Lachie Green
 Ian Nicholson
 Richard Kelleher

Concongella Landcare Group
 Crowlands Landcare Group
 Elmhurst Landcare Group
 Crowlands Landcare Group
 Northern Grampians Landcare Group
 Moyston Landcare Group
 Jallukar Landcare Group
 Jallukar Landcare Group
 Stawell Urban Landcare Group
 Navarre Landcare Group

Sub-Committee Members

Partnerships & Funding
 Native Vegetation & Waterways

Invasive Plants & Animals

Sustainable Agriculture

Community Engagement

Leanne Jackman, Michael Greene, Michael McMurtrie, Ian Nicholson
 Rosie Nater, George Holden, Phil Williams, Rob Arnsts, Mandy Smith, Neil Howell, Luke Austin (WCMA),
 David Margetson, Cathy McDermott, Peter Start
 Rosie Nater, Neil Marriott, Wendy Marriott, Ross McGregor, Malinda Godino, George Holden,
 Deidre Andrews, Mark Toomey, John Miles, Peter Brazier, Ray Graham, Kath Gosden, Daryl Leslie,
 John Stevens, Geoff Penna, Doug Boatman
 Mark McKew, Leanne Jackman, Rosie Nater, Larry McLean, Steph Arnsts, Rob Shea,
 Bob Wallace
 Leanne Jackman, Rosie Nater, Madelene Townsend, Bronwyn Bant, Cathy McDermott, Bob Wallace

Staff

Leigh Blackmore
 David Margetson
 Bob Wallace
 Allistair Stephens
 Bronwyn Bant
 Graham Pearson
 Dene Marshall
 Catherine McDermott
 Barry Curtis

Manager
 Project Manager (Native Vegetation Program)
 Regional Landcare Facilitator/Landmate Coordinator
 Project Manager (Invasive Plant & Animal Program)
 Events Coordinator (Community Engagement)
 Weed Control Supervisor
 Weed Control Supervisor
 Administration Officer/Events Coordinator
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This newsletter has been put together by staff of the Project Platypus Landcare Team with contributions from local Landcare group members.

Please forward any contributions for future newsletters to
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Project Platypus Landcare Network

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**PROJECT
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