



PEOPLE AND PLACES

HEALTHY BILLABONGS ARE A PROPERTY ASSET

The Goulburn River is an ancient landform. In consequence its path has changed many times creating an enormous collection of billabongs.

You only have to look at a Google map of a typical section between say Molesworth and Alexandra to recognise the significant number of billabongs created as the river has changed its course over the centuries.

In fact when the book on the history of Molesworth was produced some years ago the name Whanregarwen was interpreted to mean a place of billabongs.

Members of the Yea River Catchment Landcare group were recently afforded the opportunity to see how creative management of river billabongs can be incorporated within a whole farm development plan.

The group visited the 54 ha, or 140 acre river frontage property of Ken and Di Foletta on Whanregarwen Road on a "farm walk". The Foletta's acquired the property in 2002 as a rundown holding complete with an old house, sheds and poor fencing.

They have sought information and ideas from numerous sources to create a holding which is now highly productive, able to be run easily as a cattle property and to protect the billabongs and to encourage revegetation.

As Ken explained they also wanted their property to be an enjoyable place to live (for themselves and their cattle!) with an attractive outlook and presentation.

Several years ago they built their striking new house which overlooks the largest billabong on the property. When they began the billabong which they dubbed 'blackbong' had effectively dried up largely as a result of the long drought. It was also full of debris, many weeds and had no value as a bird habitat let alone as a prominent feature of the property.

As an interim measure they employed a contractor with an excavator to deepen a modest area which did result in some water being held. The billabong was later to fill completely when the drought broke and the River was in high flow. The property's Goulburn River bank frontage had also been significantly damaged by cattle; there were widespread areas of willows and hawthorns while the other billabongs on the property were also in poor condition.

With assistance from the Goulburn Broken Catchment Management Authority* a whole farm approach was devised.

This included fencing off the Goulburn River frontage, removing the willows and hawthorns by a chemical and mechanical approach and creating a new internal fencing system to facilitate stock handling and movement.

Also a stock watering reticulation system was installed drawing its source from the river and the many billabongs were fenced off to protect them and to encourage revegetation of their surrounds.

Extensive planting was also done using both native and introduced tree varieties to create bird habitat and to enhance the overall presentation of the property. The main billabong closest to their house is now a sparkling asset as it quickly filled after the drought ended.

Ken says he has identified more than fifteen bird varieties which either make the billabong their permanent or a transitional home on their migratory flights.

As a key land form of the local area the Goulburn River billabongs are a resource that can be easily conserved and managed as a key part of a whole farm or property development plan. What Ken and Di Foletta have achieved is a tribute to their energy, conservation values and their desire to make a productive use of their property and its unique features.

*The Goulburn Broken River Catchment Management Authority is able to offer advice, design ideas and in some instances limited financial support for approved works. Landowners should consult their local Catchment Authority office for further information.



The large billabong was once dubbed the "blackbong" due to its poor condition. It is now restored as a major bird habitat as well as an important visual aspect of their property.

By John Kennedy

WELCOME TO ISSUE 12

Please send any news to me at mirandayorston@bigpond.com or ring 57969261.

If you would like to receive The Granite News by email please go to www.highlands.org.au and just **subscribe, it is as easy as that!**

WHITEHEADS CREEK LANDCARE LIVES ON

WHCLC had their AGM last Friday at their hall and it was preceded by a talk by Claire Wade from the DPI on Soil Health and Testing.

We started with a BBQ and there were 20 people there for the talk and hands on demo of soil testing. We learnt how to test our soils on various parts of our land and the impact of topography and vegetation on these soils and how to interpret the results and make appropriate changes. We can also get soil kits on loan from DPI and then they will come and help us interpret the results.

We elected a new committee with some new young blood with a new secretary. Chris Freeman has taken on this position and her husband has also joined the committee. What an asset to have the next generation of Freemans in our group. It was a great night and we look forward to a good year ahead.

Our prime project is to complete the corridor planting in Lambing Gully Road but have also some other projects in the pipe line.

Cheers Carolyn Braun



ATLAS OF LIVING AUSTRALIA WEBSITE

This website promotes the sharing of species sightings (birds, bugs etc.). So if you see something, photograph something or even capture audio or video of something it can be recorded here: www.ala.org.au/get-involved/

COMMUNITY WHAT'S ON CALENDAR - MAY 2012

Week beg 13th May	<i>Terip Terip Recreation Reserve Mowing Roster Sue Martin Andrew Holloway & Tim Andrews</i>
Wednesday 9th May	Terip Terip Recreation Reserve meeting 7.30 pm
Friday 11th May	'Drinks on the Deck' at Highlands Community Hall from 6.30pm. Bring food to share for a meal together and catch up with friends old and new. All welcome - especially new faces. Gold coin donation to cover power.
Saturday 12th May	Black Market 10am - 12pm: Swap & sell your home produce at this local food exchange and "open garden". This month it's being hosted by Paul Macgregor and Jocelyn Bennett, at Clearview Retreat, 404 Fairview Rd, Kerrisdale. There will be a demonstration on how to prune and train a range of berry vines. Turn off the Goulburn Valley Hwy onto the King Parrot Creek Rd in the direction of Strath Creek. Fairview Rd is the first road on your right after you leave the Goulburn Valley Hwy. Contact 5797 0229, diversity@diversity.org.au ,
Saturday 12th May	Highlands Caveat CFA May Day, May Day, May Day Clearance Sale Community members are invited to submit items for sale. Commission will be going to Highlands/Caveat Rural Fire Brigade. Although final costs to the vendors are not finalized (eg commission, advertising etc) the more items that are for sale the less cost to each vendor. Contact John McMaster 0429861817 or Les lawson 57969265.
Sunday 13th May	Treat your mum to Mother's Day lunch at Rocky Passes Estate 1590 Highlands Rd. Book early for an inside spot 57969366 or email contact@rockypasses.com.au
May 12 and 13	EUROA COMMUNITY CINEMA "Margin Call" 107mins Drama / Thriller (MA) 4 stars We follow key people at a New York investment bank, taking us through the multitude of decisions on the trading floor. Lives are changed in a moment in the aftermath of the GFC and all its implications. Do not be late for the start of this dramatic movie as I believe that the strong story line deserves your full attention from the beginning. Starring Kevin Spacey, Simon Baker, Stanley Tucci, Jeremy Irons and Paul Bettany.
Monday 14th May	Wire & Water Workshop What: Develop your own plan to improve livestock management and stock watering points on your property. The workshop include: Aerial map Animal water use and peak demand calculations Planning & designing reticulation systems – how do I get the water where I want it? Concepts and design for rotational grazing paddocks. When: From 9.30-3.00pm Where: Mansfield DSE Office 128 Hightett Street Mansfield. Contact: Greg Bekker DPI on (03) 57 611 631 or 0417 340 236 or greg.bekker@dpi.vic.gov.au Places are limited please RSVP by 4th May 2012. Property details are required for the aerial map.
Wednesday 16th May	Terip Terip CFA Election Meeting to be held at the Terip Terip Recreation Reserve commencing at 7.30 pm. All CFA members and interested community members welcome. Please put this date in your diary."
Thursday 17th May	Ruffy Community Action Group – Meeting at Ruffy Hall, 7.30 pm. On the agenda are approval of the Ruffy Streetscape Plan and discussion of projects for the next financial year. Everybody welcome at the meeting!.
Friday 18th May	VOLUNTEERS – EVERY ONE COUNTS Volunteers who support the Mitchell Shire communities are invited to the Mitchell Shire Volunteer Luncheon to celebrate National Volunteers Week. 12.00 – 2.00pm. Broadford Shire Hall. R.S.V.P. to Renita Blayney by May 4th on 5734-6338 or renita.blayney@mitchellshire.vic.gov.au .
Friday 18th May	7.30pm at the Hall is ANTARCTICA night . Pauline & Peter, due to popular requests, will be giving a talk about their fantastic trip to Antarctica earlier this year. No we didn't make it to Mawson's Huts but we saw and had some incredible experiences in this amazing and pristine environment. Come along and discover what a truly remarkable place south of 43 deg.lat. is. RSVP for catering purposes by May 11th please 57969301
Saturday 19th May	Livestock management for small and part-time farmers - 9.30-3pm "Worough", 410 Greenslopes Rd, Seymour. Seymour Ag & P Society Jane Miller janemmmiller@bigpond.com or 5797 0243
Saturday 19th May	RuffArtz 'Season of Saturdays' at the Ruffy Hall. The second concert for this season will feature the group String Theory, who won the Peter Daly Award for 'Best Upcoming Young Traditional Group'. They will bring sweet vocal harmonies, fiddles, Appalachian dulcimer, funky cello and banjo grooves to Ruffy. Doors open 7.30 pm for an 8.00 pm start. For tickets (\$25.00) ring Glen on 5790 4318.
May 19 and 20	EUROA COMMUNITY CINEMA "The Best Exotic Marigold Hotel" (PG) 4 stars If Euroa cinema had a dollar for every inquiry about this movie we would all be going to India to stay at The Best Marigold Hotel! Apparently retirees can no longer afford to live in Britain and so they all take off on a journey to India where living is much cheaper and no doubt much more colourful. However the hotel does not live up to their expectations. The characters are enchanting, funny, endearing, challenging and a bit predictable, a total delight.
Monday 21st May	"Away with Words" SPECIAL EVENT An evening with Psychologist Andrew Fuller – A clinical psychologist with "heart", Andrew specialises in the well being of young people and their families, he offers hints for building resilience "the happy knack of being able to bungee jump though the pitfalls of life". Come along and find out more about spontaneity, curiosity and other building blocks for good mental health. Join us afterwards at the library for a reflective chat with Andrew and some mind building passionfruit sponge. Bookings 5772 0349 7-9, Sponsored by Alexandra Friends of the Library

Classifieds & Community Notices

DEAD FOX COMPETITION

Fox on the run comp, \$500 prize, starts June, to register or for further information contact Simone on hughes.creek1@gmail.com or 03 5790 4146.

POSITION VACANT GARDENER/HANDYMAN

Position available in the Seymour district. Excellent 3BR house. Large garden to maintain. Successful applicant will be keen, reliable self starter. Gardening and maintenance skills necessary. Possibility of part-time house-keeping position for partner. Please forward copy of references with application to:

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FOR SALE

2 scuba diving wetsuits - 1 x size 5 slim (mens) and 1 x size 3 (ladies) they each comprise a sleeveless overall, jacket and detached hood. Very good condition and lightly used. Enquires and offers 57969301.

BOOK REVIEW

Joel & Cat set the story straight - Nick Earls & Rebecca Sparrow

There have been a couple of these joint author stories written in recent years (Dear Venny, Dear Saffron and Hot Mail are two that spring to mind) and this is the latest offering from two great Australian authors. Sworn enemies Joel and Cat suddenly find themselves thrust together to do a tandem story, alternatively writing paragraphs a night about, for two weeks.

Not only do they loathe each other they suddenly discover that their "single" parents have met each other and started dating.

A very funny and very clever story. In fact all 3 titles mentioned are great reads. By Pauline Roberts

JAMMING ON SUNDAYS

We have a few friends who would like to meet and make music with others here at Rocky Passes ... so how about Sundays from 2-4pm under the verandah ... or in the cellar door if lunch is finished? Anyone out there play uke? If interested, please call 57969366 or email contact@rockypasses.com.au

WILDLIFE RECOVERY AFTER BLACK SATURDAY

The Yea Wetlands Committee are very pleased to bring to you a wonderful story of recovery. The Project—Focus on Fauna, is an initiative of the Upper Goulburn Landcare Network which set out to survey and record the wildlife that was returning to private properties after the Black Saturday Bushfires. The results of the year long survey, undertaken in 2011 will amaze you. See some wonderful film footage and listen to David Wakefield, a keen amateur naturalist explain the program.

Finally, be really impressed by the story of the Powerful Owls, as told by land owner Ron Litjens. The survey uncovered a family of Powerful Owls on his property and Ron has been monitoring them ever since. For more information visit www.focusonfauna.wordpress.com



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Hi there Readers,

Re Hard copies of The Granite News- at the Euroa Library we always have a few hard copies to hand out to anyone requiring one. There are still a few people with no online facilities and also those passing copies on to others. We print our copies on Tuesday morning as a rule, so these are available from 10am onwards!

We also keep a copy to read at the Library. (bring in or make a coffee and read it at leisure!). Cheerio, Justus

GOULBURN RIVER VALLEY REGION

Tourism statistics for 2011

This region welcomed 1.9 million domestic daytrip visitors (up 7.6% from 2010) We hosted 586,000 domestic overnight visitors (up 9.9% from 2010).

These visitors spent 1.5 million nights in the region (an increase of 5.7% from 2010) Intrastate visitors also increased by 12.6% (compared with 2010)

The most popular activity undertaken by overnight visitors was 'visiting friends and relatives' (46.8%) followed closely by 'eating out at restaurants' (39%) Interesting to note the International overnight travellers visiting the region for 'Holiday/ pleasure' (46.1%) originated primarily from New Zealand (19%) and the USA (13.5%) The age bracket of international visitors is 'Young Travelers' (aged below 35 yr) making up 56.7% of visitors - a reflection of the backpackers in the region during the December 2011 quarter.

NEGLECTING RABBIT CONTROL COSTS

A company has been found guilty in the Seymour Magistrates' Court of failing to comply with the requirements of a Land Management Notice to control rabbits on their property in the Gooram area.

Department of Primary Industries (DPI) Biosecurity Officer Jaye Caldwell said DPI officers served the Land Management Notice on the company in May 2011. The notice required the company to control rabbits on their property.

"A subsequent inspection of the Gooram property in September 2011 revealed that insufficient control works had been completed to satisfactorily meet the requirements of the notice," Mr Caldwell said. As a result, Magistrate Murphy found the matter proven and ordered that the company be placed under a six month good behaviour order and pay costs to DPI. "In Victoria, land owners are required to take all reasonable steps to prevent the spread of, and as far as possible eradicate, established pest animals on their property under the Catchment and Land Protection Act 1994," Mr Caldwell said. "The community and DPI have worked hard in recent years to reduce the impact of rabbits in the Gooram, Ruffy and Highlands areas. "If left unmanaged, the Gooram property would have compromised the extensive efforts of surrounding landowners."

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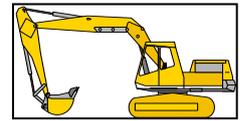
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