

Aug - Oct 2005

## Yarra Yarra Catchment Management Group QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER



### *Commissioner for Soil and Land Conservation visits the Mongers Catchment*

Andrew Watson, Commissioner for Soil and Land Conservation and Department of Agriculture representatives visited the proposed drain at Mongers 55 Zone on the 18<sup>th</sup> October. **This drain will be the pilot study for the Yarra Yarra Catchment's large scale subcatchment rehabilitation program funded under the NACC Natural Resource Management Investment Plan.**

The Commissioner and colleagues initially visited the discharge point of the Goodlands Drain, an excellent demonstration of the effectiveness of deep drains, where a large amount of reclaimed land has been returned to productivity. This was followed by an on ground assessment of the Mongers 55 drain, 70 km south east of Perenjori for the Notice of Intent applied for through the Commissioner of Soil and Land Conservation.

To begin the assessment, the group viewed the expanse of infrastructure at stake from encroaching salinity, including the MacPherson homestead,

and viewed the change in the property from 1960's to present. Russell and Janette MacPherson described the landscape changes resulting from the 1999 floods, causing productive land to become salt scold and samphire.



The expanse of Lake Mongers, the dispersion lake and the surrounding remnant vegetation impressed the assessment group. Previous concerns of the lake reaching maximum holding capacity and overflowing from the water discharging as a result of the drain

were quickly dismissed and they also saw the importance of creating a wildlife corridor between the Buntine Reserve and the lakes system.

To complete the assessment the group toured the catchment to look at the salt affected land and view an area of land revegetated in an attempt to reduce the effects of salinity. The low survival rate of seedlings showed the importance of lowering the water table before revegetation can be useful in the management of salinity for this particular catchment.

Overall the field trip was very useful for YYCMG and the Commissioner's office. The Commissioner was able to see first hand how much productive land, infrastructure and vegetation was being affected by salinity and the extremely high water table and why we are trying to manage the water table and salinity in this manner.

### *The Purpose of Forming the Yarra Yarra Catchment Regional Council?*

The Yarra Yarra Catchment Regional Council will present a united front in the management of NRM in the Yarra Yarra Catchment. A representative from each shire council will sit on the council using the Yarra Yarra Sub Region as the boundary.

The specific purpose of the Regional Council will be to protect and manage the natural resources in the catchment basin. Existing LCDs will be reformed to become Zones within an overarching Conservation District ga-

zeted under the Soil and Land Conservation Districts.

Shire Land Holdings in the Yarra Yarra Sub Region are: Perenjori - 26%, Morawa - 23%, Dalwallinu - 28%, Koorda - 4.8%, Three Springs - 8%, Wongan Hills - 3.2% and Carnamah - 7%.

#### **Advantages of the Council are:**

- Rate payers in the Yarra Yarra Catchment will have control of the running of NRM through the Regional Council
- Perpetuity

- Statutory Recognition
- Credibility and Accountability

#### **Disadvantages of the OLD system are:**

- Many LCDs in recess
- Volunteer office bearer burn-out
- Duplication of effort
- Lack of coordinated approach to drainage
- No continuity of activity
- Fragmented overlap into different catchment basins
- Inadequate resources to attract funding

## Woodland Watch - Supporting Private Bush Management in WA

Do you have woodlands dominated by Salmon Gum, Gimlet, York Gum and Red Morrel on your property? Would you like support to preserve these woodlands? WWF may be able to help YOU.....

Launched by WWF - Australia in June 2000, *Woodland Watch* aims to enhance the value of woodlands by working closely with landholders and providing practical information based on the guiding principles of 'best practice'.

Landholders, having a personal contact with the bush are first in line to help improve the value and protect their woodlands, also

benefiting from having a healthy and natural balance across their farms. *Woodland Watch* helps landholders in learning how to integrate bush management and farm management so that both bush and farm benefits. Many woodlands have been scientifically identified and assessed across WA, with over 6000 plant specimens vouchered by the CALM Western Australian Herbarium. Possibly 15 new species and 13 new populations of rare or priority flora species have been discovered and data from the flora surveys are now publicly acces-

sible on CALM's Florabase website. 135 land holders with high quality woodlands are actively participating in the project. Thousands of hectares of woodlands across WA have been negotiated for Conservation Covenants by local groups, shires, landholders and conservation groups, with thousands more hectares still to be negotiated.

For more information, please contact Rebecca Ovens, Woodland Watch Coordinator, Dalwallinu on (08) 9661 1001 [www.wwf.org.au/About\\_WWF\\_Australia](http://www.wwf.org.au/About_WWF_Australia)

### Trenching: Breaking down barriers for Deep Drainage

Trenching Systems Australia, trialled a 500 Horse Power Trencher at Rod Madden's drainage site on the 18th October.



The trencher is able to dig to a depth of 2.3m at a width of 1m. It successfully dem-

onstrated grinding through hard rock too difficult for normal excavators to dig.



These sections of hard rock often restrict the path and depth of deep drains, reducing their effectiveness.

### \$\$ Doubled for Drought Envirofunds

The government has doubled the amount of money allocated to Drought Envirofunds from \$10 million to \$20 million due to the high number of applications.

Projects in the Exceptional Circumstance area will target on-farm environmental works and measures that can:

- protect the land, water, vegetation and biodiversity resource base from the effects of the drought;
- assist preparations for the recovery from the drought; and
- prevent environmental damage when the drought ends.

## \$8 million for NRM Projects in the Northern Agricultural Region

Do you know where money has been allocated for the first year of NRM Investment by the government?

\$8 million has been accessed by the Northern Agricultural Catchment Council (NACC) under the National Heritage Trust (NHT) and the National Action Plan for Salinity and Water Quality (NAP) funding packages for NRM Investment Plan 1 (1 year).

Some projects to be undertaken in the Yarra Yarra Catchment are:

- Yarra Yarra Catchment Rehabilitation Program including waterway reconstruction, fencing, revegetation, landscape resource assessment and drain maintenance.

- Community consultation, design and costings for water management options in Perenjori and Morawa town-sites.
- Salinity Rehabilitation and Extension Program - Classification of groundwater flow systems and presentation of options available for rehabilitation to farmers.

Projects funded under NRM Investment Plan 1 are expected to be under way by the end of 2005.

Investment Plan 2 is currently being developed to extend projects from Plan 1 and fund new projects until June 2008. Plan 2 will allocate \$25 million to priority NRM projects.

For more information, please contact Cindy Walker, (08) 9973 1425 or [www.nacc.com.au](http://www.nacc.com.au)

NRM Investment Plan 1	\$
Biosecurity	138,000
Building Healthy Waterscapes	1,010,000
Caring for Our Coasts, Seas and Islands	784,079
Conserving Our Terrestrial Diversity	1,020,000
Farm Forestry	580,000
Integrated Catchment Management	1,315,000
Managing Salinity	1,281,000
Resource Assessment	841,000
Sharing Indigenous Knowledge	530,000
Sustaining Environmental Education & Knowledge	100,000
Sustaining Agricultural Production	317,000
Using Our Water Wisely	130,000
Total	8,046,079

## *Seed Collecting and Community Water Grant - Three Springs Primary School*

Jenny Borger, Cindy Walker and the Three Springs PS students and teachers have recently learnt about Acacias. Jenny talked to the students about the family name, Acacia, their different characteristics, other legumes, seed collecting and seed development. The students all participated in opening seed pods to find out the stage of development of the seed. Unfortunately the seeds were not ripe so we were unable to pick any to plant.

The children also learnt about the Aboriginal medicinal and nutritional uses of Acacias. The Acacia seeds have a high nutritional value, providing Aboriginals with a good source of energy. Other parts of the Acacia used include the flowers soaked in water for a sweet drink and the chewing of burnt leaves. The students tried ground

wattleseed and smelt wattleseed coffee to experience the flavours of Acacias. Added to the nutritional benefits of Acacias, its many healing properties for headaches, colds and dizziness demonstrated the importance of the Acacia in the Aboriginals everyday life.



### *Community Water Grant Application*

The Three Springs PS recently submitted an application for the Community Water Grant funding round. The submission includes rainwater tanks, a pump and piping to improve the schools water efficiency and reduce wasted water by capturing water off the roofs to use on the school's garden. The application will be part of the school's drive to be a Water Wise School, including water wise learning into the classrooms.

**Funds are available for on-ground works that:** increase water saving and efficiency, recycle and reuse water, and improve river, creek, wetland or ground-water health

The next round of funding is scheduled to open in March 2006. For more information please look at the CWG website [Www.communitywatergrants.gov.au](http://Www.communitywatergrants.gov.au)

## *Sustainability Side by Side—NRM Conference*

Sustainability Side by Side was hosted in Denmark in October 2005 bringing together Natural Resource Management (NRM) professionals, researchers, community representatives and landholders, highlighting past work, current projects and the future for NRM in Western Australia.

Andrew Campbell defined WA position at present to be "a significant turning point in the management of our environment as we move from awareness and demonstration to landscape scale activity".

The large scale activity will be a result of NHT and NAP2 funds for priority projects in the NRM Regional Strategies throughout the state.

The Plenary sessions outlined many interesting issues providing fodder for discussion at break times. Speakers focused on different aspects and issues of Natural Resource Management:

Gary English, Chairman of South Coast Regional Initiative Planning Team (SCRIPT), highlighted the **challenge of maintaining the enthusiasm of current volunteers and recruiting new ones**

through the implementation of the NRM Regional Strategies and market-orientated NRM.

Tony Brun, Chair of the South West Catchments Council and Executive Manager of Development for the City of Bunbury, spoke of on ground delivery needs to be standard and the norm and local governments needing to form Cooperative Regional Councils (such as YYCRC) to be able to drive their own agendas rather than be superimposed from the Perth office.

Doc Reynolds, Chair of the Aboriginal Lands Trust, outlined the importance to include Aboriginal people and their holistic view of the environment in natural resource management.

The conclusion that NRM Regions need more support to ensure the next regional investment plans have a stronger economic and science basis was made by David Pannell, Professor in the Schools of Agricultural and Resource Economics at UWA

The Landcare Awards dinner held at the NRM Conference recognised the outstanding contribution of individuals, landcare groups, schools and other

organizations to Landcare.

**Ian Stanley from Kalannie was presented with the Australian Government National Landcare Program Individual Landcarer Award** for his continued integration of trees and other natural resource management strategies into his farm.

With a focus on combining economic and environmental benefits, a large percentage of over 1 million trees that Ian and his family have planted are oil mallees. Ian has played an important role in promoting the Mallee Industry and for the last two years has been president of the Oil Mallee Association of WA (Inc).

Many workshops and field trips were held throughout the conference covering a diverse range of topics such as: Waterways and Wetlands, Native Vegetation Management, Managing Threats to WA's Landscapes, DairyCatch, Adapting to Climate Change, Profitable grazing Systems, Environmental Management Systems (EMS) and Building Sustainable Communities

The Plenary sessions will be screened on Westlink at 12pm on Wednesdays from the 9th November or a CD copy will be available soon.

## Yarra Yarra Catchment Management Group QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER

*The Yarra Yarra Group is a professional incorporated Catchment Management Group formed in 1997 by community members who wished to enhance the economic environmental and social well being of the Yarra Yarra Catchment Basin. The Yarra Yarra Basin is one of four Natural Resource Management Sub-Regions in the Northern Agricultural Region.*

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## YYCMG Calendar

### YYCMG Meetings

#### Next meeting is on:

23rd February

#### Dates for Funding Grants:

#### Envirofunds Round 8

Opening February 2006

#### Community Water Grants

Opening March 2006

## Farm Water Grants

Grants up to \$15,000 are available to provide reliable farm water supply for in house use, homestead gardens, crop spray, livestock drinking and other on-farm requirements; optimise water resource utilisation on your farm; manage excess water that may lead to soil erosion, waterlogging, flooding and salinity.

[www.wrc.wa.gov.au/owr](http://www.wrc.wa.gov.au/owr)

## Interested in NRM? Become a NACC member

**Membership is free and brings with it many benefits including:**

\* As NACC is responsible for allocating funds to NRM projects throughout the region, **have your say on where funds are most needed**

\* Access to the **latest information on natural resource management** (NRM) including grant applications and the latest research results

\* Assistance from the NACC network of NRM professionals throughout the region including **practical advice and technical support for environmental projects**

\* Chance to **participate in strategic decision making about the management of the natural resources** in the Northern Agricultural Region

\* Access to **funding and training opportunities**

\* Opportunity to **represent your community interests** on the NACC regional and sub-regional committees

\* **Gain assistance with Indigenous consultation**, a mandatory requirement of most NRM funding applications.

Membership is open to individuals who are residents, landowners, or interested in NRM, or individuals who are a member of groups, agencies, or organisations within the Region with an interest in NRM and in promoting the objectives of NACC.

The NACC membership form which, should you wish to become a member, can be printed out and faxed or posted to NACC administration: Reply Paid 95 PO Box 95 Perenjori WA 6620 Phone: 9973 1444 FAX: 9973 1464 **Alternatively**, you can complete the form online at <http://www.nacc.com.au/membership.asp>.

## *Land for Wildlife: Its FREE, Voluntary, Non Legally Binding and Inclusive.....*

The Land for Wildlife Scheme in Western Australia, launched by CALM in 1998, is a project that **encourages and assists landholders to provide natural habitats for wildlife.**

- CALM Land for Wildlife advisers can offer advice specific to particular sites on a one-to-one basis.
- Advice is practical and can help integrate wildlife habitat protection with farm management through farm and catchment planning.
- Wildlife aspects can be included into revegetation schemes and landcare with other forms of assistance and incentives.
- Valuable and interesting information can also be actively sort through various workshops, seminars, field days and excursions held throughout the year along with the weekly release of Wildlife Notes.

For more information, contact Land for Wildlife Coordinator, (08) 9334 0530.

## *Part of a Voluntary Environmental and Heritage Organisation that needs \$\$\$ ??*

Grants to Voluntary Environmental and Heritage Organisations - Round 2005/2006 OPEN

Up to \$10,000 per applicant Funding available for:

- salaries and salary on-costs for executive and administrative staff
- office accommodation rental
- electricity, gas, phone and other similar charges
- essential office supplies and equipment
- staff and volunteer training
- photocopying and printing costs
- travel costs incurred on behalf of the organisation