

Activity Update June 2018

1. Meldanda;

- a. Had the new hot water serviced installed at Meldanda, a big thankyou to David Bennet who paid for this much needed addition to the site, it will make washing up of dishes much easier during events. Thankyou also to MMC Darren Reid for organising
- b. Faith Lutheran College used Meldanda as their base site for their practice hike
- c. Cambrai Primary School held their annual fun run at Meldanda
- d. 90 youth from the Heysen District Scouts and 15 adults camped at Meldanda for 3 nights, with a huge variety of activities, they were also diligent in collecting up the caltrop that got stuck in their shoes and disposed of in bins that Bob White made up and place at gates
- e. Through the Spiny Daisy project we have been allocated with 10 boxes of mixed native tubestock from Trees for Life
- f. Bob, Wayne and Aimee completed their last field and other assessments for the Chemical Accreditation and have been awarded their certificates
- g. Worked with Chris Tugwell to put together a Specky Brekky flyer to promote Lunar Eclipse Event to be held on the 28th of July
- h. Planned a small revegetation and weed project for part of the creek at Meldanda in preparation for Youth Environmental Learning group run by NRM Education Officer Danielle Dutschke
- i. 45 students from YEL and other supporting staff, officers and volunteers supported event at Meldanda
- j. Installed the native grass identification signs at the orchard



Figure 1 one of the bins for caltrop control

2. Nursery;

- a. Ongoing propagating, weeding, watering of the nursery and plant sales
- b. Irene delivered workshop this month 'Winter Propagation', there was a good turnout of volunteers who helped propagate species like Native Pine and Christmas Bush, and without this help we couldn't run our nursery. In the last 6 months we have had 3 regular volunteers and a number that have attended organised events, volunteers have contributed 844 hours of time to the nursery, Meldanda and other Landcare activities, this equates to over \$21,000 worth of time



Figure 2 volunteers propagating at nursery

3. Committee;

- a. Kept committee informed of relevant correspondence, workshops, and other information
- b. Managed the office, volunteers, staff, and all necessary administrations including monthly accounts, reports and committee meeting.
- c. Spent several days in training to become an accredited consultant with the Native Vegetation Council, it was a great course and I learnt how to do the Bushland Assessment method, Scattered Tree assessment and the Rangelands assessment
- d. Commenced writing final report for Connecting Communities Grant, due early July
- e. Was offered a small grant of \$12,500 for 'Seed collection and vital attributes study'
- f. Chris Tugwell put together an abstract on the Dark Sky Reserve for the Landcare conference to be held in Brisbane in October. I will present at the conference if the paper is accepted and we can hopefully get some funds to help pay for the trip
- g. Picked up 140 droppers from the hardware shop to support the Woodland/Paddock Trees project
- h. Applied for a SUEZ Community Grant for \$9000 to improve the knowledge and participation of the community in creating valuable habitat on their properties, nature

reserves and schools to enhance local biodiversity. This project will be delivered through community engagement workshops throughout the Mid Murray Region, to increase knowledge on habitat needs of our precious native fauna, including possums, reptiles, birds and bats.

- i. John Endersby did the first bird survey on Pine Hut road, recording 29 different bird species with 172 birds recorded. Unusual recording included Yellow-winged Honey eater, Dusky Wood swallow, Grey Fantail, Mistletoe bird and Red Wattlebird
- j. Meeting with NRM Board staff to discuss ideas for Community Grants project which has been recently announced. The applications are due on the 16th of July and is funded by SAMDB NRM \$300,000 levy funds
- k. Supported a Murray Darling Carpet Python talk at Cambrai Primary School, where Daniel Saliba spoke about the research project he has been doing in the region



Figure 3 Murray-Darling Carpet Python talk Cambrai Primary School

3. Mid Murray Council;

- a. Furthered the Management Plan for the Mannum Waterfalls with Irene Bugeja. Irene presented an executive summary of the plan, met with Mel and Jake and discussed next steps. Costings of the on-ground works will be developed with the completed draft ready for the next Open Space and Recreation Advisory Committee Meeting in August
- b. Spent several days in the field installing roadside markers, we have marked a further 28 sites which include all of Robertson road from Yookamurra Sanctuary up to Towitta road, including Church road up to Three chain road, which means there is a full corridor of protection from Towitta Springs all the way to Yookamurra road. I also marked a section of Three Chain road adjacent to Towitta Springs Reserve. Other sites of significance we marked were Three Chain road in front of Kannapa Springs Reserve, Pine Hut Road from Lake Moody to Swan Reach CP, Rothe Reserve on both sides, Hoads Road near the Sanderston Cemetery and Dry Weather Road from the intersection of Robertson road up to the Pipeline road. Within these roadside markers we recorded the vulnerable, rare, near threatened or threatened plant species. Prepared and sent a report to David Hasset and Russel Pilbeam has all the data for mapping.

- c. A camera was set up at the Swan Reach dump to determine the activity of cats. The camera was set up for 6 days, there was activity recorded from 2 bird species, a lizard, rabbits, cats and foxes. There was an animal that look like a hyena but think it was some type of cat. There were 13 sightings of cats and foxes estimated 4 different animals. The vegetation surrounding the Swan Reach dump contains native pine and some good shrubby understorey. It could potentially provide some important habitat for native fauna, especially if the weeds and pest animals were controlled at the site.



Figure 4 Feral cat at captured on camera Swan Reach dump

- d. Provided Keyneton Windfarm Community Fund project ideas to MMC staff which included; 1. Support threat abatement, revegetation, and projects at nature reserves along 3 chain road, 2. Increasing community education and awareness by holding field surveys and workshops on plant identification, bird and reptile surveys, 3. Camera trap projects at the Reserves to collect data on native fauna like the Western Pygmy Possum, Murray Darling Carpet Pythons and declining bird species to help inform management decisions, 4. Support projects at Meldanda; Dark Sky site and facility development, Community Gardens, critically endangered Spiny Daisy translocation site and other projects, Marne River rehabilitation project, volunteer activities, 5. Road reserves revegetation corridors – assess road reserves or other vegetation corridors from the eastern hills to enhance and protect. Provide linkages for fauna from the hills to large tracts of mallee and the Murray River

Microbat Project;

- a. Don Lester came down to Meldanda and fixed up bat boxes that were in some state of disrepair
- b. Received back all the evaluation forms from the project officers, they would all like to be involved again if they still have their positions with the current lack of funding available. All the bat detectors have been returned and/or collected and audited.
- c. Met Nicole Hahn from Riverland West Landcare to finalise the interpretive sign for Banrock Station on bats and habitat boxes.