



Coordinators AGM Report 2013

Significant Highlights

- Woolshed Creek Restoration – Since our Sustainable Farming in the Majura Valley project and the formation of a stakeholders reference group the Molonglo Catchment Group has been working with Roads ACT to try and get the best outcome for the Majura Valley Landholders and the health of Woolshed Creek. The realignments of the creek have now been completed and Molonglo Catchment Group secured funding from Roads ACT to revegetate the lower part of the creek. Molonglo Catchment Group has now come to an agreement with Roads ACT to secure funding to revegetate the realigned upper part of the creek and they have agreed to remove blackberry along the creek within the road footprint. Roads ACT have also agreed to put in a fence around 50 metres from the creek line (along the realigned section) to allow further plantings of woodland species.
- Canberra Show – The three Catchment Groups along with the Rural Landholder Facilitator and Parkcare Coordinator had a stall at the Canberra Show on 22nd to 24th February. We distributed information to nearly 2000 people including local farmers. On display were weed and pest information, frogs and water bugs, native plants to give away and general land management information. Everyone felt the stall was successful and well worth doing.
- ACT Centenary Bioblitz! – The Molonglo Catchment Group was a key organiser for this event. A big thank you to Rachel Marks for all her hard work on the Bioblitz and we were sad to see her go once the event had finished. We teamed up with Atlas of Living Australia, CSIRO and ACT Government to put on this huge event. The Bioblitz comprised scientists, naturalists, citizen scientists and members of the public working together to record a snapshot of Black Mountain's biodiversity. A total of 28 surveys were run and 5 workshops held. We had a great weekend, discovering a total of 322 species, from a total of 808 recorded sightings. In total we had approximately 453 people attend the event. The data was recorded electronically to a special ALA portal using a Samsung Note. The data can be viewed on the portal here

<http://fd.ala.org.au/bdrs-core/act-bblitz/review/sightings/advancedReview.htm>

- Molonglo Catchment Group funding – This year was a difficult year in the current funding came to an end in July and so a new application for Regional Investment Strategy money to support the groups work for the next 5 years had to be written and submitted with in a very short timeframe. The Molonglo Catchment Group was successful in its application and so has secured funding for the next 5 years. While this is good news, the funding granted was not the full amount that was asked for and so Molonglo Catchment Group is running on a very tight budget yet still has large milestones to reach. Unfortunately due to the uncertainty around funding the Molonglo Catchment Group small grants was unable to be offered to members this year.

Molonglo Catchment Group was successful in some other grants this year. ACT Heritage Grant, Interacting with the Ngunawal perspective which is being coordinated by Karen Williams and an ACT Environment Grant, Revegetation of Lower Molonglo after woody weed removal. The Molonglo Catchment Group was also successful in getting funding for Land for Wildlife to run some workshops to help roll out the program in the Molonglo Catchment. This funding was secured thanks to Mel Hillery.

- Molonglo Catchment Strategy review – Mel Hillery has done a wonderful job in doing the strategy review which has turned out to be a mammoth task. There have been two committee workshops for the review and it is nearly complete.
- Work experience – In May we had two Karabar High School students participate in our Indigenous Work Experience Program. The students had an action packed week which involved Waterwatch, Vegwatch, visited Tidbinbilla with the rangers and visited Mirabee (Ngambri Aboriginal Land Council land). They completed a PlaceStory to record their week. The student thoroughly enjoyed themselves and left with a new perspective on NRM and job opportunities.
- Horse property visits – As a follow on from the successful Horse management workshops the Molonglo Catchment Group was able to offer a property visit from Alison Elvin and a subsidy for work carried out as a result of her advice.

This was greatly appreciated by landholders and as a result 340 Hectares now have improved infrastructure to fence off riparian areas, manage grazing and increase vegetation.

- Bush on the Boundary Googong – When there was a heavy downpour of rain on Australia Day 2013 the settling dam of Googong development breached and turned the Queanbeyan River brown. This was my first engagement with Wickerslack Lane residents! The situation forced developers and community to interact and finally pushed through the first meeting of Googong Bush on the Boundary. Fortunately it was successful with the community being presented with explanations on how the recycled water system works, monitoring being done and sediment control. Questions were asked and answered and the general feel was positive. Keeping this meetings running regularly will be a challenge.
- 3D catchment model – Thanks to our volunteer Chanty the model has had LED lights installed. It went to its first event in November and people were impressed and learnt a lot about the river systems.

General Progress

We continue to develop the community's knowledge and skills to identify and deal with NRM issues.

- Workshops held – PlaceStories training, Spray Safe and Save at Burra, Integrated Weed Management at Burra, Pindone training, Autumn Wander (fungi), 5 workshops on plants and animals of Black Mountain were held during the Bioblitz.
- Advice/Support provided – Plantings in Majura Valley, Woolshed Creek water quality, 82 ha weed control at Royalla, fox control, 2nd Pindone treatment in Royalla, Burra and Carwoola, Rabbit warren mapping in Majura Valley.
- Events attended – Canberra Show, Living Next to Nature Festival, Volunteers Expo, Green Expo (ANU and UC), Botanic Gardens Bush Capital, Jerrabomberra Wetlands open day.
- Continued our association with the local arts community via Along the Molonglo
- Continued to work closely with our networks including our Park and Land Care Groups, Murrumbidgee CMA, PCS Community Programs Officer, ACT Landcare Facilitator, GCG and SACTCG Coordinators and the Source Water Protection Team. A relationship with CIT has been strengthened with Lynton Bond taking a class out on a Catchment Tour.
- Continue to distribute information with Weed Packs still being the most popular. TAFE and CIT distribute them to their students for certain subjects.

Closing comments and the year ahead:

I would like to thank everyone on the committee and Water Watch Coordinator Dr Stephen Skinner for all of their support this year. I took leave for nearly 5 weeks in April/May and was grateful for Ro McFarlane readily taking on the role of acting coordinator and doing a fantastic job under the guidance of Stephen, Rachel and Lynton.

It has been a challenging year with funding uncertainties and then the confirmation that Waterwatch would not be funded. We now also have big milestones with less money than we had previously! We are also still negotiating the monitoring requirements for our milestones with ACT Government.

The year ahead will bring some changes as Waterwatch was not funded, the Waterwatch Coordinator position has been changed to incorporate more of the milestones and as a result the Waterwatch program will be reduced. The plans for the Murray Darling Basin money have not yet been released, but we are hoping that some of this funding will be used to support Waterwatch.

An exciting development in the NRM community is the Weed Spotter app that is expected to be finished early next year. We will then be able to loan our Samsung Note smart phones to member groups so they can use the app to record the location of weeds.

We will also be farewelling Stephen Skinner who will be retiring in March 2014. I wish him all the best in Sydney and will miss his wealth of knowledge and sense of humour.

Anna See
Molonglo Catchment Coordinator
December 2013