

Partners/Sponsors Natural Heritage Trust, Melbourne Water, Port Phillip and Westernport Catchment Management Authority, Stonnington City Council, Port Phillip City Council, Kingston City Council, Bayside City Council, Glen Eira City Council, Macedon Shire Council, Brimbank City Council, Moonee Valley City Council, Hume City Council, Melbourne City Council, Maribyrnong City Council, Moreland City Council, Yarra City Council, Yarra Ranges Shire Council, Whitehorse City Council, Monash City Council, Maroondah City Council, Manningham City Council, Knox City Council, Whittlesea City Council, Nillumbik Shire Council, Banyule City Council, Darebin City Council, Frankston City Council, Casey City Council, Cardinia Shire Council, Wyndam City Council, Moorabool Shire Council, Melton Shire Council, Hobsons Bay City Council, Southern Rural Water, Mornington Peninsula Shire Council, Boroondara City Council, Dandenong City Council, The Department of Primary Industries, Department of Sustainability and Environment, Department of Education, Environmental Protection Authority, Merri Creek Management Committee, Moonee Ponds Creek Management Committee, Werribee River Association, Amphibian Research Centre, Landcare, Coast Care and Conservation Volunteers Australia.

Monitoring information 139 groups, 4909 participants, 234 sites. **Education participation** 16926 participants.

Coordinators Keir Jarvis, Jessica Miller, Ben Scullin, Trish Grant, Leigh Mitchell, Kate Rhook, Anja Steiner, Amy Paraman.



Port Phillip

Photos courtesy of Forest Waterwatch program.



Left Some of the friendly faces that make up the Forest Waterwatch team.

Below After a storm, turbid runoff from a forest road drain was spotted entering Mississippi Creek.



The forest waterwatch program

Supporting stewardship of state forests

The issue of logging native forests can be an emotive one for communities concerned both about their local environment and their livelihood. The Forest Waterwatch program in the eastern ranges of the Port Phillip region is one project attempting to encourage the diverse stakeholders who use the forest to come together in order to support better communication and understanding.

Waterwatch has partnered with the Department of Sustainability and Environment's (DSE) Tall Forests Project, and the Community Forests Project (a DSE and Shire of Yarra Ranges initiative) to kick-start the Forest Waterwatch project. Participants, including logging contractors, DSE staff and interested community members, are invited to examine the impacts of forest roads, coupes, and tracks during heavy rainfall events, and assist in creating and delivering solutions to improve the management of these areas.

Turbidity was selected as the target parameter for the program. Stream crossings along DSE and Shire-managed forest roads, coupe roads, and some fire tracks are monitored. Participants gather baseline and rain event turbidity data and rainfall data. Already, results are prompting on ground action.

Local Waterwatch coordinator Trish Grant says, "I've learnt an enormous amount about the forests and what goes on in them by being involved with these people. It's been exciting to see the information they're collecting translating into on-ground change. There's a wealth of knowledge about the forest held within the community and the stories and history that's shared are often as interesting and important as the data that's being collected'.



4WD track erosion picked up by turbidity event monitoring on Mortimer Creek.

'For me, this project is intensely practical. As well as providing a purposeful community engagement opportunity, it provides a necessary focus on water quality. And it's amazing what you find when you look. Community observation and odd turbidity readings have already led us to discover problematic track issues that can now be dealt with. And given the sheer length of road and track network in the state forest, we will no doubt discover more.'
Wally Notman, Department of Sustainability and Environment.

Gary Moran, a logging contractor who has lived and worked in the region over the last 22 years, has seen a lot of changes in both the forestry industry and the local Warburton community. "Once upon a time, you just did the (logging) work and went home. Now you need to be more up to date with all the issues and be prepared to debate them. I joined the Forest Waterwatch program for myself and also my industry, to cross a few bridges and snuff myths about logging in water catchments. The program has brought me closer to locals I would not normally have spent time with. The program encourages respect for others' opinions and to find common ground. If we find a problem, we'll deal with it'.