

WEST GIPPSLAND WATERWATCH STREAMLINES

Spring
2010



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Latrobe River Freshwater Circus

Nicole Russell

2010 is the Year of Biodiversity and to celebrate, Waterwatch held an information night at the Wellington Entertainment Centre with speakers discussing the rich biodiversity of the Latrobe River. To start things off Jim Reside from Wildlife Unlimited gave one of his informative and hands on talks about local native fauna. Microbats, Sugargliders and bushrats were on show and Jim demonstrated the many different ways the animals can be trapped and surveyed for research and monitoring.



One of the many microbats that inhabit the Latrobe river

Matt Bowler from the WGCMA then gave an overview of the flora that is found around the Latrobe river and gave an incredible slideshow of various habitats and remnant vegetation that is found along the river including billabongs and wetlands. A highlight was a DVD showing close up footage of macroinvertebrates and how they move in water and the various body parts that can be used to distinguish between different types for identification. A presentation on aquatic weeds and a discussion from Trust for nature on the assistance available to landholders to protect their remnant vegetation

and wetlands concluded the informative evening. All participants were sent home with a goodie bag and native seedlings to plant in their yards.

Forest, Water and Fire Camp

Nicole Russell

For the second year running Waterwatch worked in partnership with DSE, Parks Victoria, Gippsland Water and the CFA to deliver the Forest, Water and Fire camp for local schools that have been affected by bushfires. During the camp students learnt how environments interact and affect each other and the management responses to natural events such as fire. Day 2 of the camp was Water day and students got to canoe and test the water quality of the Crater Lake in Rawson and also learnt how to survey for macroinvertebrates at Coopers Creek. At the end of the day students were tested on their activities with some excellent results - over 88% of students receiving 85% or more on their daily quiz sheet! This camp has been a great success in terms of partnerships between agencies and for students to gain an understanding of the environment around them.



Marni Speed training the students in macroinvertebrate sampling



Statewide QA/QC June 2010

Nicole Russell

The Statewide Quality Assurance Quality Control mystery sample testing was conducted recently. The QA/QC event uses mystery samples to ensure volunteers are following correct testing procedures and can also identify equipment that is not working. A QA/QC night was held in Traralgon at the WGCMA office for those who could attend. Samples were tested followed by yummy dinner and lots of discussion. Then the documentary 'Dancing and the Devil Fire: Uncovering the Hidden History of the Alps' was shown which discussed the indigenous connection to the Victorian Alps. It was very informative enjoyed by all. Results from the QA/QC will be forwarded when received from the Waterwatch State team.

Environmental Flow Releases

Nicole Russell

During the month of May the Macalister and Thomson Rivers both received Environmental Flow Releases. Waterwatch was invited to attend a morning tea that was held at the Glenmaggie Weir, where Minister for Water Tim Holding announced the establishment of an environmental entitlement for the Macalister River, due to water savings achieved from the Macalister Irrigation District Channel Automation Project. Waterwatch, along with other participating organisations, were thanked for attending the morning tea. It was certainly positive to see that the West Gippsland Waterwatch program and the role of volunteers is being recognised at State Government level.

The environmental flow releases are also a positive influence on the health and ecology of the waterways and will enhance and protect the vital needs of these rivers and those who depend on them.

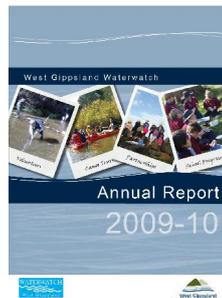


The weir at Lake Glenmaggie showing the water being released

Annual Report

Marni Speed

The 2009-10 Annual report has now been completed. Highlights from this report include statistics and case studies on participation in the schools education program, river health communication events, partnership activities and the conclusion of the NCI project. The year 2009-10 coincided with a lot of changes which have become positive in integrating Waterwatch as an important part of river health. I am certain you will enjoy reading about them.



Estuaries Unmasked

Michelle Dickson

EstuaryWatch together with the WGCMA hosted an "Estuaries Unmasked" night seminar at Inverloch in early July as part of the expansion of

the Estuarywatch program across the state. To date this has included the establishment of an estuarywatch group on the Powlett River. The group are now regularly collecting photopoint and water quality data with support of Estuarywatch Coordinator Matt Khoury.

The Estuaries Unmasked night seminar was aimed at educating and raising community awareness about estuarine environments in Victoria. So on a wet and windy Tuesday night a crowd of 25 gathered at the Bunurong Environment Centre to hear from David Tiller (Karoo Consulting) and Damien Cook (Australian Ecosystems). The topics of discussion included the physical and chemical processes in estuaries, 'living on the salt wedge' and managing and restoring coastal wetlands in a time of climate change. The topics provoked so much debate and interest from the crowd that the night went an hour and a half over time – a sure sign of success!

Bug Blitz

Nicole Russell/ Marni Speed

The Heart Morass was the focus of a 3 day school event on 25th-27th September. Approximately 300 students from 5 different schools attended this event with curiosity and enthusiasm. The event included activities such as the Discovery Walk, Reptiles of Local Areas, Forest Regeneration, Bug specimen collection, the Big Cocoon art project, and Water testing. This was followed up with a family day on the Sunday where people could get involved with planting trees and walking around the Heart Morass that has sprung to life with the recent rains.





West Gippy Waterwatch Calendar

- Septemeber 18th ALT training
- October 12th-14th National Water Week SRW Cowwarr
- October 20th National Water Week SGW Event
- November Macalister Canoe tour
- December Register for teacher PD in February 2011



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Key Stakeholders and Sponsors

