

STREAMLINES

WINTER 2011

Commissioners visit

Commissioner for Environmental Sustainability, Kate Auty has been touring Victoria and attended a full day tour with in the West Gippsland region with the WGCMA.

Waterwatch was invited to talk to the commissioner about the success of the Trackfire project that is currently running along the Traralgon Creek. The project was highlighted to demonstrate how the local community has been involved in Natural Resource Management initiatives following the 2009 bushfires.

Kate showed great interest in how local communities could get involved with NRM through programs like Waterwatch and be able to connect with their local environment.

The commissioner, Professor Kate Auty is working on the State of Environment report 2009-2013. She is involving people from varied backgrounds to discuss issues surrounding climate change and sustainability. The commissioner is working with communities, individuals, groups and local governments throughout Victoria to improve environmental management.

There seemed to be interest in using Waterwatch data as well as data from other sources when compiling the report. Keep a look out for updates on this progress.



Corner inlet estuaries unmasked

Corner Inlet Connections recently hosted an 'Estuaries Unmasked' information night at Foster, as part of the Prom Coast Seachange Festival.

Corner Inlet and Nooramunga marine and coastal parks are an internationally significant Ramsar wetland providing vital habitat for 30,000 resident and migratory wader birds.

The night began with Birgita Hansen from the Department of Sustainability and Environment presenting data collected from surveys of migratory and local waterbirds. Results from these surveys inform programs such as the Victorian Index of Estuarine Condition and the Estuary Entrance Management Support System. Birgita explained that shorebird monitoring in Corner Inlet is proving its worth, with birds banded in Corner Inlet being recorded in New Zealand and South East Asia. There is also evidence of a decline in the numbers of migratory birds visiting Victoria which is likely to be caused by a loss of habitat in the Yellow Sea, which is a stopover for the majority of migratory birds to and from the Arctic Tundra.

Jonathon Stevenson, Parks Victoria Ranger for the Marine Programs followed up with an overview of the various habitats found in Corner Inlet including mangroves, intertidal flats, shallow and deep rocky reef and the valuable seagrass communities. Corner Inlet contains the only Broadleaf seagrass meadows in Victoria, as well as the more common fine leaf species found across the state. Seagrass meadows provide spawning grounds, nurseries, feeding grounds and refuge for fish and invertebrates and contribute to ecosystem processes such as reducing ocean acidification and storing carbon.



Corner Inlet Connections is a partnership between government agencies, landowners and the community. The partnership is committed to maintaining and improving the environmental, agricultural and economic sustainability of the inlet and its surrounds.

DSE camp/ partnerships

This year's Forest, Water and Fire camp was definitely a cold one. None the less 80 students braved the weather to participate in Waterwatch activities.

This year the Waterwatch session was set up at Tyers Junction due to road works at the original site of Coopers Creek. Primary schools involved included Glengarry, Thorpedale, Moe Albert St, Tanjil South, Moe Elizabeth St and Moe South St.

During the activities students learnt how the different issues can lead to poor river health and the scientific methods that can be used to better understand the water quality and health of local waterways.

The students showed great enthusiasm when searching for macroinvertebrates and were excited when they found stoneflies, caddiesflies and dragonfly nymphs in their sampling trays.



Working in partnership with agencies such as the Department of Sustainability and Environment, Country Fire Authority and Parks Victoria to deliver key messages to students on Victoria's national parks, fire safety and the health of natural waterways is a great step in changing behaviours of local communities towards a sustainable future.



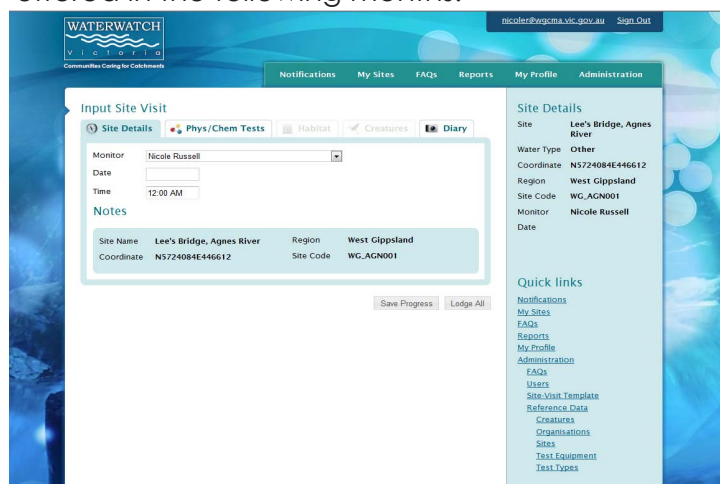
It's a Girl 

Marni Speed (West Gippsland Waterwatch Facilitator) had a baby girl on the 15th May and they named her Evie.

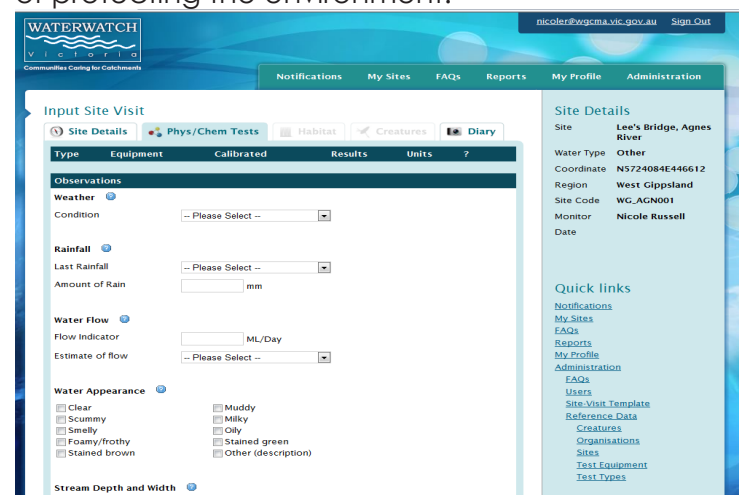
She weighed 8 pound 8 ounces. All are doing well. Congratulations Marni, Jarrod and Jonah

New Waterwatch Victoria 'on-line Database'

Well the new Waterwatch database is here. At the moment Waterwatch staff can access it to ensure all monitors have been set up and historic data has been transferred before releasing it to the public. Usernames and passwords have been allocated and for the volunteers that are interested in entering their data straight into the system (pending approval) training sessions will be offered in the following months.



This new system will provide an opportunity to reduce the amount of paper being used therefore reducing the pressure on natural resources which fits in with the Waterwatch ethos of protecting the environment.



ALT Training

Training in the ALT (Alternate Level Taxonomy) method for identification of macroinvertebrates continues to be rolled out in the region.

A recent training day at Traralgon provided an opportunity to describe to volunteers in more detail the techniques used in the method to assist with identifying macroinvertebrates. This includes how to identify body parts, movement and how to read keys. There was also a dvd that displayed how certain macroinvertebrates move in trays giving participants the chance to observe the macroinvertebrates natural movements.

The presentation was enhanced with the use of preserved specimens for volunteers to identify. This was a chance for participants to try to identify macroinvertebrates with a trained professional nearby for support. Materials, such as id manuals and keys, were handed out to volunteers to take home for further study. Training and interest session are offered throughout the year to volunteer monitors to increase their knowledge base.

Another session will be held later in the year.

Work experience

Hi I'm Darcy Britton from Kurnai College, Churchill Campus. I've been fortunate enough to spend two weeks work experience at the WGCMA. I have spent time in the Waterwatch program with Nicole Russell, out in the field with Wetlands and River Health project officer Matt Bowler and Landcare facilitator Andrew Wolstenholme, as well as spending time with the Communication and Engagement team.



My experiences have included water quality testing, filling data sheets, discussing revegetation with landholders, how to improve habitat in game reserves, and data collation from Farmworld enquiries into a table. I also learnt about the website for CMA and how to use it, assisted with the school program Bug Blitz and saw the Gippsland Water Treatment Plant and its educational Vortex facility.

Work Experience here has helped me decide I want to go to University and study Environmental Science; it has been a great experience and I have enjoyed it a lot.

Teaching our Future Teachers!

Waterwatch undertook a training day with 4th Year Bachelor of Education students at Monash University, Churchill campus.

This was a chance for Waterwatch to 'infiltrate' these student teachers with the Waterwatch message and methods providing them with the knowledge of how the Waterwatch educational program could be used in the classroom in relation to Victorian Essential Learning Standards.

The Waterwatch educational program fits into the majority of domains that are nestled into the three strands of Physical, Personal and Social Learning, Discipline Based Learning and Interdisciplinary Learning.

This session gave teachers the tools to plan their classes involving the environment and hands on learning activities. Waterwatch facilitator Marni Speed has designed a framework to assist teachers with unit planning in relation to Waterwatch.

This session was based on the teacher professional development sessions that are offered by West Gippsland Waterwatch to schools throughout the Gippsland Region.

Farmworld

Farmworld for 2011 has come and gone, for another year. This year the WGCMA and Waterwatch again had a stall in the Baw Baw pavilion offering information on the activities and works undertaken by the authority, landholders and volunteers throughout the West Gippsland region.

Waterwatch provided water samples collected from 4 sites along the Latrobe River. The samples were presented in clear containers along with the result for pH, electrical conductivity, turbidity and reactive phosphorous tests along with a map showing the sites where the water samples were taken from.

This display demonstrated to visitors to the site the differences in the water quality of the Latrobe River up close. Many people stopped by to ask questions about what the Waterwatch program accomplishes in the community and how Waterwatch and the WGCMA work together

West Gippsland Waterwatch Calendar

July 28th -Presentation for BawBaw Sustainability Network

August 17th -ALT training session, Traralgon

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